



THE NOE VALLEY VOICE

Neighborhood House Prices Hit the Roof

And Condos Soar to \$699,000

By Corrie M. Anders

Deborah de Lambert was elated, to say the least, about her family's new home on Day Street. The house was large—four bedrooms, a living room, formal dining room, an office plus family room. It had some architectural pizzazz with crown molding and bay windows. And the big back yard provided plenty of romping room for her twin 3-year-old boys.

Then there was the location. The house was one block from a children's playground, relatively close to a Muni street-car line, an easy commute from downtown, and in a kid-friendly neighborhood known for having some of the best weather in San Francisco.

"It was just perfect for us. It met all of our needs," said de Lambert.

It also cost de Lambert and her husband, Chandler Visher, a cool \$1 million. They moved into the house in April.

Welcome to Noe Valley, which is riding the crest of a real estate tsunami. An endless stream of cash-laden buyers are bidding up residential prices to record heights—that is, when they can find a home for sale. There are nowhere near enough available properties to meet the demand, according to neighborhood real estate agents.

"There's a yard of demand and an inch of dirt" is how real estate broker B.J. Droubi characterized the current real estate market in Noe Valley.

And that means pay dirt for sellers, who have seen prices jump more than 50 percent in the past two years.

"It's near impossible to buy a house for under \$400,000 at this point," said Randall Kostick of Zephyr Realty. "The average price is \$500,000 to \$700,000 for a house in reasonably good condition in the heart of Noe Valley."

Figures kept by the San Francisco As-

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Shopper Nancy Bulkley scopes out the comfortable clothes that are the neighborhood's trademark at Cotton Basics on Castro near 24th Street.

Photo by Beverly Thorp

Is There a Noe Valley Look?

If So, It's Relaxed and Casual

By Anne Sengès

We all know that to be a proper Noe Valleon, you have to carry the right accessories: the baby stroller, the Jack Russell terrier, and the cell phone hidden discreetly in your pocket (it's only for emergencies). But is there such a thing as a Noe Valley look?

In the eyes of several people the *Voice* questioned on 24th Street last month, the answer is no. We're free spirits here. We wear what we want. We each have our own unique fashion.

One man we talked to said, "I always thought we were just slobs." A woman entering Gladrags admitted, "There probably is a Noe Valley look, but I don't know what it is."

But Douglass Street resident Virginie Drocourt, 27, who works in the clothing industry, thinks she has Noe Valley pegged. "A look in Noe Valley? Of course there's one. Just check out the stores on 24th Street. I call it 'hippie chic.' Women

in Noe Valley want to look relaxed and casual. For instance, they love hemp—it looks cool. They always wear casual clothes, but they are impeccably cut. They dress more sophisticated than people might think."

Voice illustrator Karol Barske, who's lived in the neighborhood for 25 years, also has observed a thread running through our clothes. "Women here wear earth tones, ethnic jewelry, and natural fibers, but nothing tight or brightly colored—definitely not turquoise. The men all wear Dockers or jeans—that classic L.L. Bean garb."

Our local fashion experts, at clothing stores along 24th Street, mentioned "comfortable" more than once.

"The Noe Valley look is casual. It is a comfortable look," said Gale Trent of Designers' Club at 24th and Sanchez. "In Noe Valley you see people wearing jeans, you see a lot of long skirts and dresses, even though the younger clientele likes short skirts and very tight pants. And I would also add that the most popular accessories among Noe Valley women are dogs and strollers," she said.

Mary Cote at nearby Joshua Simon (3915 24th St.) noted that summer fog and wind can make a difference, too. "People in Noe Valley look just for comfort. There are a lot of moms and a lot of babies. People are always wearing comfortable clothes and layers because the weather is changing constantly."

But Susan Mitchell, also from Joshua Simon, hesitated to pin down a Noe Valley style. "People might be offended by that. They like to have their individuality. We want to offer people the opportunity to create their own look," she said.

According to Liz Klein, owner of the store, Noe Valleons are more daring and original than, say, Union Street shoppers, who often stick to designer labels.

Carla Weinberger, manager of Gladrags (3985 24th St.), agreed that local women are more relaxed about their wardrobe. "What our customers want is comfort and style," she said, pointing out that black remains the store's number-one-selling color.

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Two Local Parks May Get Dog Runs

By Sally Smith

Come next year, dogs may be able to run and jump for frisbees—sans leash—at two Noe Valley parks. That is, if the city follows the lead of its Dogs Off-Leash Task Force, a 14-member advisory group that's been wrangling over the issue since last October.

In April, the task force issued a report recommending that 20 city parks, including Noe Courts and Upper Douglass Park, be added to the 18 existing dog exercise areas in the city. The proposed dog runs now face many hurdles at City Hall and the usual tug of war between advocates for kids, dogs, trees, ball fields, and open space at the parks.

Says Tom Mills, a member of the task force, "My guess is that it will take six months of hearings before any of the dog areas gets approved for a trial run."

At Noe Courts—the one-acre park at 24th and Douglass streets—the report calls for dogs to be free to roam off-leash only at certain times, before 9 a.m. and after 5 p.m. It also suggests that the southeast corner—including the children's sandpit and a large section of the grass—might be designated a dog-free zone.

"There is an ongoing discussion around fencing this area so that it could be made completely off-limits to dogs," says Mills. (Current rules at Noe Courts are that pet owners must keep their dogs on leash at all times.)

Up the hill at Douglass Park, the proposed dog run would be in the flat grassy area near the 27th Street entrance to the upper tier of the park (not the lower Douglass Playground). "The city could make sure it wouldn't interfere with the ball field, and there would be signs and a clearly marked border between the dog run and the rest of the park," says Mills.

The new area would replace the existing dog run, which now skirts the rugged cliffs above the ball field. "The dog run we have now is, quite simply, unsafe for people and dogs. There's even a sign that says 'Cliff Unstable—Stay Back.'"

As for Upper Noe Recreation Center, Noe Valley's other major park (at Day and Sanchez), Mills says the task force came up with no plans for a dog run there. "Upper Noe never got mentioned specifically as an off-leash area. It wasn't on the list."

He noted, however, that Glen Park was included in the 20 sites. The proposed dog run would be along Alms, the gravel fire road between Elk Street and the preschool in the park. Suggested hours for allowing dogs off-leash at Glen Park were before 8 a.m. and after 5 p.m.

Mills was the secretary for the task force, composed of dog owners, advocates for children, and representatives from city agencies such as the Board of Supervisors, Rec and Park, and the Police Department. He drafted the report, adopted at a public meeting attended by more than

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Deborah de Lambert steers movers into her new home on Day Street, which cost a pretty penny in today's white-hot housing market.

Photo by Beverly Thorp



Lily of the Valley. From Glen Canyon to Baja Noe's Valencia Street, lush thickets of Cala lilies are in full bloom from the spring rain.

Photo by Najib Joe Hakim

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LETTERS 33¢

Doggie Doggerel

Editor:

I truly enjoyed your story about the person who puts signs in the dog droppings along Church Street ["Poop Protester Leaves His Mark," *Voice* February 1999]. However, "Yum Yum" leaves much to be desired. "This is good" also fell short of good poop poetry.

So I am submitting some hot-off-the-sidewalk poetry for your consideration. My thought is that these words might cathect an even cleaner walking space.

I.

Here I lie
a pile of poo,
waiting for a
virgin shoe.

II.

Walk your dog
without the plastic,
leave your trail of
something gastric.

III.

Please, dear owner,
pick me up.
I just was dropped
by your pooping pup.

IV.

This is just
a big brown blob,
reminders of an
unconstipated dog.

V.

Here I sit
a sidewalk mire,
waiting for a
cycle tire.

Bree LeMaire
Peralta Avenue

Parking Nirvana?

Editor:

I was dismayed to read Kathryn Guta's essay on "Looking for Parking Nirvana" in your March issue.

If Ms. Guta is a Noe Valley resident, why is she driving to places like Martha's on Church Street? The J-Church is an excellent way to get up and down Church Street, and the #24, #35, and #48 Muni buses also run through the Valley. Or if Muni is not her style, then walking is a great way to get there.

If Ms. Guta is a nurse, she must surely realize that her practice of double-parking with the flashers on, while being blatantly illegal, is also dangerous, as it blocks a travel lane and forces other drivers to maneuver around her by driving on the wrong side of the street. Double-parkers also pose a threat to pedestrians and bicyclists by limiting the vision of the drivers who may be coming up behind the double-parked vehicle and attempting to pass in an unsafe manner.

Parking on the sidewalk, regardless of the reason, is illegal in California. If Ms. Guta sees cars parked on the sidewalk, she should be concerned for the elderly, the handicapped, or folks pushing strollers who have to squeeze by cars illegally parked in pedestrian space in order to pass. Not only does sidewalk parking remove this precious pedestrian space, but it also endangers pedestrians after the car is gone, by leaving oil, and other slippery fluids, on the sidewalk. Lastly, the sheer weight of an automobile can crack and

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A Tourist's Testimonial

Editor:

I recently spent a weekend in Noe Valley. I had a great time, and it truly would be a fantastic place to live.

My friends were able to book me into the Hidden Cottage bed and breakfast on Noe Street. What a wonderful place to be based out of! The garden was in full bloom and was beautiful, peaceful, and restful. The interior was delightful. It felt so comfortable, just like a cottage should feel. It was so nice to be just a short jaunt from the shopping area on 24th Street.

I enjoyed the culinary delights of Herb's Fine Foods and spent much time browsing in Cover to Cover and Phoenix bookstores. I tried a shot of Papaya Hawaiian (hold the grass) at Juice-It. I enjoyed the great selection of cards and gifts at Just for Fun (Vicki the salesperson was most accommodating). I smoked a fine Macanudo I'd bought at Graystone Liquor Store.

I think I gained 10 pounds just smelling the aromas emanating from the Noe Valley Bakery. I almost wished my shoes needed repairing so I could have left them at the Wooden Heel.

The residents of Noe Valley are truly blessed. That was even more apparent during Sunday mass at St. Philip's. Father Michael Healy was a warm and engaging pastor. The choir sang beautifully.

I left Noe Valley feeling so wonderful. My next time back I'm going to check in with that real estate office with the beautiful gated entrance on 24th Street above Castro (I knew I should have written down the name). It would be wonderful to call Noe Valley home.

Bud
Falls Church, Virginia

Dear Bud: The phone number for B.J. Droubi Real Estate is (415) 550-1300.



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Big Surge in House Prices

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sociation of Realtors show that the fourth most expensive region in the city is District 5, a realty designation that includes Noe Valley, Glen Park, Twin Peaks, the Haight-Ashbury, and Mission Dolores. During the first three months of this year, buyers paid an average of \$658,000 to live in District 5. The three districts with higher average prices were located in the northern half of the city, and cover such areas as Pacific Heights and Sea Cliff.

The frenzied real estate activity isn't confined to Noe Valley's wonderful Victorians, Edwardians, and bungalows. "It's the same with condos," said real estate agent Bernie Katzmman of Herth Realty.

Buyers undaunted by \$500,000 to \$700,000 prices descended on luxury condos at three new developments almost as soon as the models were opened last month. At a 12-unit townhouse-style project at 25th and Homestead streets, real estate agents said demand was so strong that original prices were raised to \$695,000 from \$629,000 for a three-bedroom unit, and to \$575,000 from \$529,000 for two-bedroom units.

Seven condos on the site of the old St. Paul's Primary School (300 Valley St.) also hit the market with \$499,000 to \$699,000 prices. Pacific Union, representing the developers, opened bids in late April and sold all but one unit in the first week.

Meanwhile, mouths were dropping along Church Street as Pacific Marketing unveiled prices at St. Paul's Commons, the new condo complex at 323 29th St., in St. Paul's former convent and high school. Four of the 36 units will be sold as BMRs (below market rate) via the Mayor's Housing Office, but the rest were listed at \$405,000 to \$465,000, for two-bath, two-bedroom units.

Two years ago, it was rare to hear of a single-family home selling for \$1 million in Noe Valley. Not anymore. There have been several \$1 million sales already this year.

A contemporary home built last year—one of four new residences at the corner of Sanchez and 21st streets—sold in March for \$1.8 million. That was a brand-new, four-bedroom home with a three-car garage. Another home in the cluster sold last year for just under \$1.6 million.

Those were new homes with the finest modern amenities and cityscape views. But older homes also have been million-dollar sellers. Take the elegant 1908 Edwardian (with inlaw) in the 3400 block of 21st Street. The six-bedroom, 3-1/2-bath home previously sold in 1993 for \$670,000 and again in 1996 for \$779,000. It sold again in March of this year—for \$1,464,000.

There are a number of homes currently on the market in the \$800,000 to \$900,000 range that could garner more than the asking price, due to the neighborhood's popularity and lack of inventory.

That is what happened in the case of Visher and de Lambert, who are both attorneys (though de Lambert has been a full-time mother since the birth of their twins). The couple, expecting their third child, wanted a home larger than their old one, located in San Francisco's Clarendon Heights neighborhood.

They looked in several neighborhoods, and in January seriously began to concentrate on Noe Valley. The price tag on the Day Street home, nice as it was, shocked them at first.

"I thought it seemed high for that neighborhood. Day Street [at Castro] is practically outer Noe Valley—and then to have to pay more than the asking

price," said de Lambert.

The home was listed at \$850,000. The couple upped their offer by \$125,000, but that was only good enough to win a backup position. Then the first offer fell apart, and the couple was able to negotiate a deal and call the moving vans.

"We were elated. To not have to look anymore was a big relief," de Lambert said.

Ten years ago, the heart of prime Noe Valley real estate was within two or three blocks of the 24th Street commercial strip, with its array of clothing boutiques, restaurants, bars, and coffeehouses. North of 24th Street was viewed as more desirable than south of 24th Street, and addresses became less exclusive moving toward 30th Street.

"Now there is a blurring of those intra-neighborhood demarcations," said Larry Stebbins, Herth Realty's office manager. "It's true—we are seeing property on Day Street going for a million dollars."

Despite the out-of-sight prices, buyers still are lined up for homes.

"I sold a house on Elizabeth Street that was listed at \$575,000 and it sold for \$668,000. There were eight offers on that property, and that's not atypical," said Kostick. "There's a lot of overbidding going on. For every property that goes on the market, there are 10 to 20 potential buyers willing to pay the asking price or more."

Real estate broker Ian Berke agrees there's a rush on Noe Valley properties. "I've made 22 offers for my buyers since the first of the year and only made three sales—and I consider myself lucky," said Berke.

Berke increased his production after he "got wind" that a 23rd Street homeowner was thinking about selling. Trying to avoid competition, Berke took his buyer directly to the seller and "made him a very good offer," before the four-bedroom, three-bath home was ready to be listed on the open market.

The seller wanted \$895,000 for the totally renovated home, constructed by pioneer Noe Valley developer John Anderson. (Anderson erected dozens of low-cost houses for families left homeless after the 1906 earthquake.)

Berke's client, attorney Adam Elsesser, called the two-story Victorian "a perfect house." Elsesser would not divulge the final purchase price, but said it was well over what the seller originally wanted. "We got lucky that we didn't get into a bidding war," said Elsesser, who has lived in Noe Valley for eight years and



The demand has been so strong at these condos on 25th Street near Homestead that the seller recently raised prices to \$575,000 and \$695,000 for two- and three-bedroom units.

Photo by Charles Kennard

was buying a new home after a divorce.

Elsesser and de Lambert got their respective homes and were delighted about it. Still, they expressed concerns that fewer people would now be able to make the transition from renter to homeowner in Noe Valley.

"We were fortunate to be able to afford it," said de Lambert. "But what about the other families—school teachers, janitors, and bus drivers?" she asked.

It's a question that may be around for a long time to come. □

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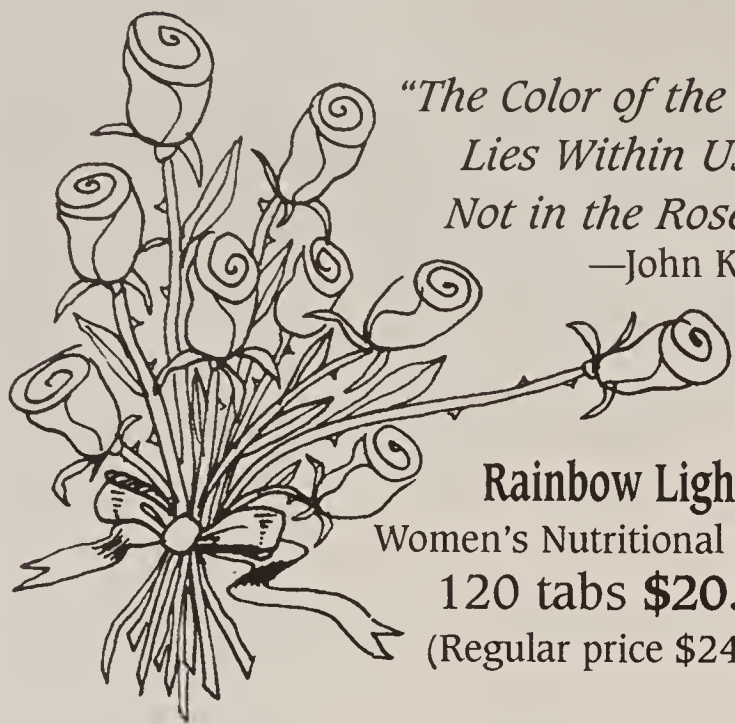
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LETTERS 33¢

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damage the thin concrete surface of the sidewalk.

As a final point, Ms. Guta states that street parking is free. This is a misstatement. "Free" parking is subsidized by everyone who pays taxes in the city, including me and the other roughly 30 percent of San Francisco residents who do not own vehicles.

In a city choked with automobiles, the problem is not that there is too little parking; the problem is that there are too many cars. Instead of printing articles about the woes of parking in San Francisco, perhaps your paper could focus on encouraging folks to look at more environmentally friendly ways of getting around, like public transit, bicycling, and walking.

Craig Snyder
 23rd Street

Editor's Response: We appreciate your thoughtful comments on what was intended as a lighthearted piece on the neighborhood's parking squeeze. To clarify, Kathryn Guta never parks on the sidewalk. Nor does she use her car to drive to and from Martha's. Still, an older or disabled person might.

Noe Valley Stores and Students: The Way It Was and Could Be

By Bob Crowley

I visited Noe Valley recently and happened to see the February edition of the *Noe Valley Voice*. As a former Noe Valley resident (1945–1965), I read with interest two articles, one dealing with the life and passing of Mike Callahan's wife, Peggy Burge Callahan, and the other reporting a meeting between Noe Valley merchants and students at James Lick Middle School.

The stories brought to mind how businesses in Noe Valley and their relations with young customers have changed over the years. And not necessarily for the better.

I never knew Peggy Callahan, nor frequented her shop Cathexis, but from her husband's description she sounded like the type of merchant who operated in the Valley when I grew up there. Honest, innovative, energetic, and helpful, she apparently won the hearts of those around her. I sense from her husband's comments that she got along well with kids and adults alike.

In his memoir, Mr. Callahan men-

tioned Al Frey's Toy Store as a business that had been displaced by skyrocketing rents and the changing nature of the neighborhood. I am sure most of today's Noe Valley residents have never heard of Al Frey and his store, which was located next to Wong's Meat Market. (Wong's was at 24th and Castro, where Miss Millie's is today. Al's toy shop was in the next building up 24th Street.)

Let me take a minute to describe Al Frey, a unique individual. These comments will have a bearing on the current situation between merchants and students at James Lick.

Mike Callahan's description of Al Frey's business as a "toy store" was very generous. I'm not sure how you would characterize his store by today's standards. There were toys, but there were also things like candy, baseball equipment, and hardware and hobby supplies. The shop had no fancy displays, no signs for sales, no slick decorations, no salespeople (except Al Frey himself), and no apparent organization. There were counters that were filled with merchandise and boxes arranged in haphazard fashion. Boxes and cartons—some opened, some not—were strewn all over the store. I don't know how Mr. Frey ever found anything in that place, but he always did.

What was remarkable about his store was that it had no set hours of operation. Sometimes you would find Mr. Frey in the store puttering around, but more often than not, he wasn't there. He had a sign in the window that said, in effect, if the store is not open, "Call Al in the Alley!"

The alley was located next to the store, and you opened the alley door and yelled, "Hey, Al!" In a few minutes, this kindly old gentleman would come rambling down the stairs from his apartment and open the shop. It did not seem to matter to him if you came to buy 10 cents worth of candy or a \$10 baseball glove, or called him at 9 in the morning or 7 at night. He was always cheerful.

To his customers, mainly in the 7 to 15 age group, Al Frey's store seemed like a treasure trove. Every one of those boxes had some hidden treasure inside, or at least we thought they did. His youthful customers would ask for something, and Mr. Frey would rummage around for a few minutes and come up with an item. It was just a matter of finding the right box. Because of all the unopened boxes and their unknown contents, the store held a great attraction for all of us.

No one ever seemed to leave empty-handed—at least not in my day. Whatever amount of money you had, it

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HOUSE HISTORIES

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Voice Mail

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Noe Makes a Loose Fashion Statement

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The men dress casual too, but don brighter hues on occasion. Said Nicole Roche of Workwear, the new men's store on 24th Street, "They love comfortable clothes like polar fleece, and they also like bright colors, at least on their T-shirts."

Marilyn Sitkoff, of Ocean Front Walkers (4069 24th St.), said she always buys her shirts, socks, and shorts with neighborhood tastes in mind. She recently attended the Magic Show in Las Vegas to scout out new lines for the store.

"I discovered a line of backpacks that you would wear on your shoulder but which mold to your hips. When I saw that, the first thing I thought was: This is so Noe Valley! People in the neighborhood are whimsical and fun," she said.

But we insist on staying clear of Madison Avenue. "If there is a look in Noe Valley, I would probably say that it is more loose than tight, even though the tight look is more fashionable right now," said Kai Lamming of Cotton Basics at 1301 Castro St. "Gray was the hot color this past year," she added, "but I did not see as much gray in Noe Valley as elsewhere."

Barbara Boissevain, a young woman shopping at Mary's Exchange on Castro Street (dressed stylishly in a black velvet jacket, black pants, and a royal blue shirt), agreed that Noe Valleons are less likely to be slaves to fashion than residents of the Marina or North Beach. "The look in Noe Valley is not as trendy as in other parts of the city," Boissevain said.

Another shopper, Nancy, who recently moved from Noe Valley to the Sunset, went even further, saying that "women in Noe Valley only wear loose pants. They don't really pay attention to their looks."

So what if we'd be out of place on a Paris runway? Maybe our casual attitude toward clothes is part of the neighborhood's charm. □



Johanna Friedman helps customers like Beverly Saba (right) sort through the many samples of Noe Valley fashion at Mary's Exchange on Castro Street. Photo by Beverly Thorp



The Noe Valley look may be down to earth, but we still like to click our heels, says Christine Sanchez, manager of Rabat at 24th and Noe streets. Photo by Beverly Thorp



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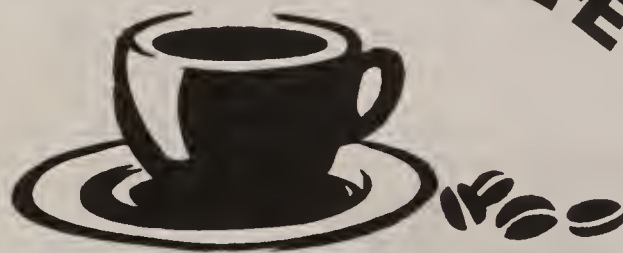
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Remembering Al Frey's Toy Store

Continued from Page 6

always was enough to purchase something, especially candy. If you were interested in a big-ticket item like a baseball or model airplane and didn't have enough money, Al Frey would sometimes give it to you and tell you to pay the difference later. He might even reduce the price to what you had in your hand. Of course, the honor system was in effect. You always paid Mr. Frey back, even if it was just a few cents at a time.

Given the way he operated, he must have had a hard time making any money. I wonder how he was able to stay in business, with such a laissez-faire approach. Maybe he was independently wealthy and operated the store for fun, just because he liked kids. I wish I had been smart enough then to ask him about things like that, but unfortunately I wasn't. Whatever his reasons for being in business, he was one of the most beloved people in the neighborhood.

It would have been easy to "take" something from Al Frey's store. There were no security cameras, guards, or salesclerks to watch you. Once Mr. Frey turned away on one of his quests for merchandise, you could have picked up a toy and he never would have been the wiser. I'm sure the thought crossed some minds, but none of my friends ever actually shoplifted. How could you steal something from a man who was likely to give it to you if you asked?

Mr. Frey had a sign in the window that said, in effect, if the store is not open, "Call Al in the Alley!"

I can't say for sure that other businesses operated the same way Al Frey's did or had the same close relationship with the children of Noe Valley. They probably couldn't have if they'd wanted to stay in business. Still, their relations with Noe Valley students and young people in general were good. The owners of the true five-and-dime stores—Smith and Meyer's—and Bud's Ice Cream and the Castro Pharmacy, to name a few, seemed to get along well with neighborhood children. They were fair and treated their youthful customers with respect and patience. For many kids in the Valley, working in one of these stores after school or during the summer was their first real job.

I know this is 1999 and things have changed dramatically in Noe Valley over the years. I'm not saying bring back the good old days of my youth (though they were good and a lot of fun). Those days are gone forever.

What I'm saying is that whatever the year, merchants and students don't need to be at loggerheads. Human nature hasn't changed, nor have the qualities that most adults and children want to experience. At the top of that list would be respect and courtesy, followed closely by honesty and fairness.

I sense from the comments in your stories about business people and students that both sides want to get along. It is obviously in their mutual interest to do so. By meeting, they have taken the first step toward resolving their differences. I hope they will meet again and continue their dialogue. I also hope that when they meet, they will remember Al Frey and his magical store. □

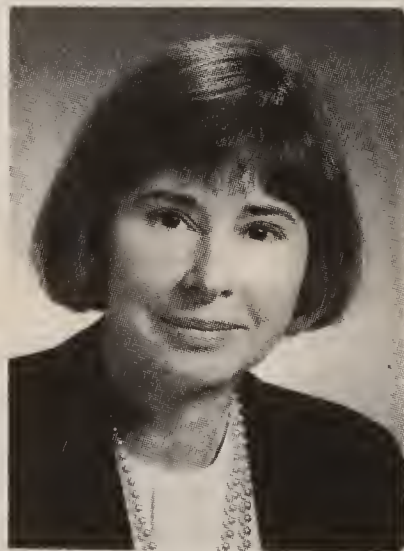
Bob Crowley now lives in McLean, Virginia.

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Noe Courts and Douglass Park Top Dog Run List

Continued from Page 1

100 people at the Hall of Flowers.

Mills, a Jersey Street resident often seen walking with his beagle Dino, also serves as head of the Noe Courts Coalition, a group that has been lobbying for two years for more off-leash play areas.

Mills said the citywide task force "concentrated on putting the exercise areas in places where there were the most dogs. Those were Noe Valley and the Castro, the Haight, and the Mission. Our research showed that in the 94114 zip code, we had four times the number of households with dogs as with kids. In Noe Valley, we've got settled gay couples, newly married couples, families with young children, a fair scattering of 20- to 30-year-olds, and older empty-nesters. All of these groups are likely to own dogs," Mills maintains.

He's proud to have won "a major victory for off-leash recreation," but knows the task force may meet some resistance.

In fact, some park users already have their backs up. Several parents watching children at Noe Courts last month said the park was too small to give free rein to dogs. "Letting dogs run around off leash can scare the little kids, and it certainly won't help the poop problem," said one mom, who preferred not to give her name.

Still, the Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Improvement Association, which looks after both Noe Courts and Douglass Park, has adopted a wait-and-see attitude. "We're sort of taking a neutral position right now. It's simply a proposal, and it has many more hoops to go through, and a long public hearing process," said Elizabeth Street resident Dorthe Deubler, a spokesperson for the 110-member group.

Deubler — who has two children, 5-year-old Rebecca and 2-year-old Ryan — hopes park users can work out a compromise. "Our group encompasses both dog owners and 'kid owners,'" she explains, "and we think Noe Courts can be both a dog play area and a kid play area. Why be divisive?"

Mills, who is a psychiatrist, agrees. "We all have the same interests at heart. We want the park maintained, the crime low, and for everybody to enjoy the park."

The next hearing for the proposed dog runs will take place at a May 11 meeting of the Board of Supervisors' Recreation and Parks Committee (City Hall, 1 p.m.). If approved by the committee — composed of Supervisors Amos Brown (chair), Mark Leno, and Gavin Newsom — the report will move on to the Rec and Park Department and the Parks Commission for hearings. Any dog run okayed by the commission will face a yearlong trial, before being made permanent.

Meanwhile, the Noe Courts Coalition, which has a mailing list of 200 ("all Noe Courts users," says Mills), will try to put its best foot forward at the park. The group posted a sign that asks dog owners to pick up after their pets and "keep your dogs away from the sand playpit, whether there are children present or not. Nothing else is so provocative to parents."

The sign also recommends that dog owners come to the park as close to sunrise and sunset as possible, when fewer children are using the playground.

The group is also co-sponsoring (with the Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Association) a Noe Courts Clean-up Day, on May 15, from 9 a.m. to noon.

Mills asks volunteers to bring your work gloves and "wear clothes you don't mind getting dirty." Refreshments and brooms will be provided.

Dogs may attend, but only on leash. □



The Buzz on the Street in March was over the cuties in the window at the Animal Company at 24th and Diamond streets. Pictured at 13 weeks is an African Grey parrot, looking over a couple of 8-week-old cockatiels.

Photo by Beverly Sharp

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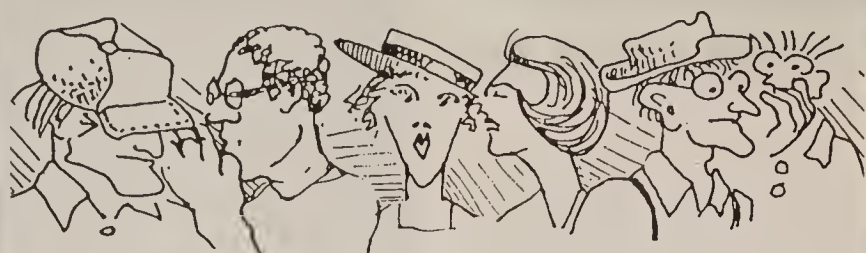
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Hahn's Hibachi's Neighbors Are Breathing Easier

By Mark Robinson

Hahn's Hibachi serves pork chops, barbecued pork, and something called the "Pile o' Pork." But neighbors of the the Korean barbecue on Castro Street say the restaurant's menu is missing one essential porcine item: a working "Smog Hog."

That's a device that keeps the smoke and barbecue aroma from escaping through the restaurant's ventilation system and irritating nearby residents. Last month, the city's Planning Commission threatened to revoke Hahn's Hibachi's operating permit if the so-called "odor mitigating device" wasn't up and running.

The permit was granted last year on the condition that the restaurant install the Smog Hog.

Hahn's owner, David Bass, let a maintenance contract on the device lapse because of nonpayment, according to zoning administrator Robert Passmore. Neighbors like Lawrence Kulig of Jersey Street quickly alerted Passmore to the sudden increase in the smell of barbecued pork and soy sauce.

"We don't have any issue with the restaurant except that we want them to operate responsibly," Kulig said. "Mr. Bass doesn't seem to understand how people suffer with this. The kind of food they make produces a heavy odor that just permeates everything."

During an April 15 hearing before the Planning Commission, Bass promised to restore the Smog Hog's contract and to make sure that the exhaust from the restaurant was minimized. The commissioners decided not to revoke the operating permit.

"The long and short of it is we're in compliance," Bass said. "We prevailed at the hearing, and we're going on from there."

Residents say the problem has abated—for now.

"All of a sudden it cleared up," said Lorraine Sherrill, who lives on 26th Street and has spearheaded the opposition to the odors since the restaurant opened in 1996. "There's only been one faint whiff since the hearing. He should have done this a long time ago."

Sherrill, who is president this year of the residents' group Friends of Noe Valley, said that she and her neighbors will be sniffing around for any signs that the Smog Hog isn't doing its job. "If it gets worse, Passmore is going to get calls," she said. "But now that [Bass] has taken care of this, maybe we can get off his back." □



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Please contact me if you'd like to talk about your real estate plans, or for a free market analysis of the property you own now. Visit my web site at www.jenniferpost.com to find out more about me, send an e-mail to jennifer@jenniferpost.com, or call me at 415.345.2587.

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POLICE BEAT

Robbery Count for March: 1

By Officer Lois Perillo

Although one robbery is one too many, there was only a single robbery reported in my part of Noe Valley during March—and it was on a bus.

On Tuesday, March 16, at 12:15 p.m., Officers Rosemary Castro and Manuel Solano were alerted to a robbery in progress on a 48 Muni bus heading east on 24th Street from Castro. The officers advised police dispatch and requested backup patrol units, who helped remove three suspects, ranging in age from 14 to 16, from the bus at 24th and Bartlett streets. The youths had targeted another 14-year-old in a foiled strong-arm robbery.

The suspects were arrested and booked at the Youth Guidance Center because of the violent nature of their crime. (Juveniles whose offenses are nonviolent are eligible to be sent to CARC—Community Assessment Resource Center—a program that mandates monitoring and counseling in lieu of routing through the criminal justice system.)

Auto Booster Nabbed

Meanwhile, there were 14 reported “auto boosts”—car break-ins—in Noe Valley during March, and one man was arrested for auto burglary.

A 25-year-old male resident of the 700 block of Vienna Street, who was seen by both witnesses and police inside a vandalized vehicle, was taken into custody by Officers Dean Bacciocco and Jose Jimenez. Thanks to neighbors' quick calls to police on Monday, March 15, at 2:36 a.m., the suspect was arrested and the radio he had apparently removed from the vehicle's dashboard was found along with burglary tools inside his bag in the car. The car owner identified the radio.

The suspect was booked on one felony count of auto burglary and one misdemeanor for possession of burglary tools. However, since the car owner was a Minnesota resident, she returned to her state shortly after the incident, and the charges against the man were dismissed.

Burglar Uses Rear Window

Noe Valley reported eight burglaries in March. Four involved houses or flats, two were of apartments, and two garages.

One of the burglaries was a “hot prowler,” police jargon for when the resident is home during the break-in. In the early morning hours of Sunday, March 14, an unknown person illegally entered a flat on the 900 block of Douglass Street and stole items from inside the residence while the tenant was asleep in a front room. The thief apparently got in through an unsecured rear window. The tenant later reported he heard or saw nothing during the night.

As is mandatory in all break-ins where a resident is present, a crime technician was sent to the scene to collect evidence.

Four Domestic Violence Cases

Four people reported that they were the target of domestic violence during March. All four incidents involved the infliction of injury by a cohabitant. In other words, the injured person was hurt by someone living with her.

In one case, a 63-year-old woman reported that her 62-year-old former live-in boyfriend, who also owns the Church

Street building in which she lives, had raped and otherwise abused her over a three-month period.

In a separate incident, occurring on Sunday, March 14, at 3 p.m., a 42-year-old man was arrested by Officers Diane McKeivitt and Maria Oropeza after he reportedly assaulted and injured his wife in their home on the 800 block of Noe Street. The man was booked into county jail on a felony and held until the following day, when he was released upon posting bond. Since the arrest, the man has appeared in court three times, entered a not-guilty plea, and provided the court with proof of enrollment in an alcohol treatment program.

In the third incident, on Thursday, March 18, at 12:30 a.m., a 26-year-old man was arrested by Officers Tom Abrahamson and Robert Padrones for assaulting his 28-year-old wife in their home on the 3500 block of 23rd Street. The man, who had apparently been drinking, was booked on a felony, but the charges were later dropped by the district attorney.

In the fourth domestic violence case, reported March 19, a 50-year-old woman told Officer Hope Nechuta that her 39-year-old former girlfriend, who lived in the same apartment with her, had dragged her by her hair out of bed and down the hallway. The older woman gained her release by biting her attacker on the hand. The attack occurred the previous week, on Friday, March 12, at her home on the 3500 block of 25th Street. The woman did not report the assault at the time because she feared further violence. But she decided to phone police on March 19, when the former girlfriend called and said she was on her way home to beat her up.

The suspect did not make good on her threat, but Commissioner Agatha Hoff issued an emergency protective order, prohibiting the ex-girlfriend from contacting the other woman and ordering her to move from the shared apartment. This type of restraining order expires in five days, so if protection is needed for a longer period of time, the targeted woman should request a permanent protective order from Superior Court (450 McAllister St.).

Threats, Stalking & Assault with a Car

A 49-year-old woman has been frequently targeted by her former 52-year-old boyfriend in a series of assaults, threats, vandalism, harassment, and stalking incidents, resulting in 11 police reports since their breakup in August 1998.

In the most recent incident, on Friday, March 19, at 3 p.m., the woman was driving on 24th Street near Vicksburg when

the suspect sprang out from between parked cars, jumped onto her car's hood, and then fell off. The woman continued driving on 24th Street until the suspect appeared again, this time driving a blue Mazda Miata, which he rammed into the driver's side of her car. She immediately parked her car and called police.

Officer James Escobar responded, but was unable to locate the suspect. Three people came forward as witnesses to the crime, which is classified as an “ADW,” assault with a deadly weapon (in this case, a vehicle). This serious incident and all related occurrences are being investigated by SFPD's Domestic Violence Unit, which can be reached at 553-9225.

Warm Weather Helps to Heal

In answer to your many queries about my case, in which I was injured last June in an ADW/vehicle incident in Oakland, the woman who assaulted me pled guilty to a felony and is now the responsibility of the Alameda County Probation Department, which is assigned to monitor her progress and compliance.

No word yet on monetary restitution to me. My injuries have healed, although as many of you who've had broken bones know, those sites seem to announce changes in the weather. I'll be very happy when the warmer weather is here to stay!

Thanks again for all your kind words and support. Until next month, be safe, and I'll see you on patrol. □

San Francisco Police Officer Lois Perillo covers her Noe Valley beat—from Valencia to Grand View and 21st to Cesar Chavez—on foot and on bicycle. If you would like to discuss a crime or safety problem, call her at 558-5404, the community policing line at Mission Station.



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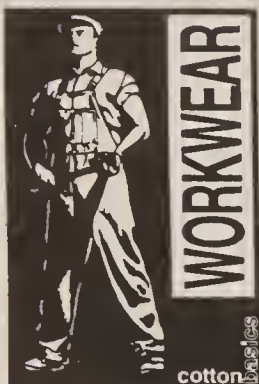
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A Guide to Noe Valley's Hidden Bed and Breakfasts

By Pat Rose

Bed and breakfast inns and private guest houses can offer a pleasant alternative to expensive downtown hotels, and they also allow visitors to experience San Francisco's unique neighborhoods firsthand.

Noe Valley is home to its share of quaint (and sometimes quirky) B&Bs, and the *Voice* decided to update its list before our friends and family descend on America's most popular city this summer.

The nine guest lodgings listed here offer a variety of hospitality styles—from a European tourist home to a fully furnished private apartment. If you choose to stay in one, remember that you are a guest in a home, not a hotel, and should treat it accordingly. (Also, be forewarned that these B&Bs don't allow smoking.)

A nice advantage for most is their proximity to 24th Street or Church Street—our two shopping areas. More importantly, all of the owners are friendly and accommodating hosts who love to meet and entertain people.

Oliver House

25th Street near Vicksburg

Contact: Patti Oliver at 695-0700

This cozy, one-bedroom B&B is actually an in-law apartment on the ground floor of owner Patti Oliver's home. She converted the room four years ago, she says, as an alternative to renting it out. "By using the apartment as a bed and breakfast, we have more flexibility and

can make it available for family and friends when they visit."

Guests enter Oliver House through the bedroom, which is decorated in Laura Ashley-style prints. Floral pink wallpaper, handmade quilts, and decorative pillows accent the room, which offers a double bed, desk, dresser, and walk-in closet. Cat motifs are everywhere—cat books, cat dolls, and ceramic cats sitting on the shelves. But guests don't have to worry about the real thing wandering around because Oliver's cats are kept upstairs.

The living room has a couch and chairs set around a brick fireplace, and a large red and white quilt adorning one wall. A collection of Stratfordshire blue and white dinnerware is displayed on a sideboard along another wall. A small bathroom off the living room includes a tiled shower.

A kitchen at the far end of the room has a stove, microwave, and small refrigerator, and is well stocked with dishes and cookware. Oliver says she's happy to lend guests anything else they need for stovetop cooking.

Breakfast is usually a sweet roll, fresh fruit, juice, and coffee, which Oliver stocks in the kitchen before guests check in. (Special breakfast requests can be accommodated if guests let Oliver know in advance.)

Oliver House has cable television and a private phone line. While there is a no-children policy, Oliver does allow infants who are not yet crawling, and there is space for a small port-a-crib in the living room.

Rates are \$95 per night for a two-night minimum, and weekly rates are available. Booking at least a month in advance is recommended, although Oliver says she does not have a traditional busy season.

"Most of our business is parents visiting the neighborhood for the birth of a baby or other events. We like having parents or grandparents who have ties to the



The dining room at the Dolores Park Inn on 17th Street has plush red velvet chairs and a marble fireplace. Photo by Beverly Thorp

neighborhood—usually they are quite delightful people."

Dolores Park Inn

3641 17th St., between Church and Dolores

Contact: Bernie Vielwerth at 621-0482

Down the hill from Noe Valley (and two blocks from historic Mission Dolores) is a striking two-story Victorian mansion that was built in 1874. This historic house is surrounded by a gold-tipped wrought-iron fence and bordered by a garden of cala lilies, fuchsia, magnolia and palm trees, and a water fountain. Owner Bernie Vielwerth, who bought the mansion 23 years ago, has spent years restoring and decorating it.

Inside is a double parlor filled with antiques. An 1860 Queen Anne secretary sits next to three bay windows that light up the room with morning sun. In the afternoon, guests partake of coffee, tea, or wine while resting on a Victorian settee in front of a large brick fireplace.

Down the hall is an ornate dining room with a glass table, red velvet chairs, and a marble fireplace. Breakfast, which includes eggs, toast, waffles, juice, cheese, and bagels, is served from 8 to 10 a.m.

Guests can also dine outside on a patio behind the kitchen, where they'll meet Vielwerth's menagerie of finches, cockatiels, canaries, and hummingbirds (and perhaps his two dachshunds, who follow him everywhere). A parrot named Congo can be heard whistling from the nearby carriage house, where Vielwerth resides. The carriage house has a jacuzzi, which guests are invited to use during the day and early evening.

Upstairs at the inn are three guest bedrooms, all furnished with antique armchairs and lace curtains, and sharing a bathroom and shower down the hall. In

addition, the house offers a two-room suite with a four-poster bed, television and VCR, kitchen, marble bathroom, and a 20-foot outside deck.

Rates range from \$89 to \$189 per night, with a two-night minimum. For longer stays, Vielwerth will negotiate a weekly rate.

Dolores Park Inn is popular and heavily booked year-round—75 percent of the guests are repeats—so call for reservations well in advance. The inn is half a block from the J-Church streetcar and within walking distance of the 16th Street BART Station.

Liz's Bed and Breakfast

Church Street between Clipper and 26th streets

Contact: Liz Bernheimer at 648-2515

If you like the idea of a European-style bed and breakfast, you'll like Liz Bernheimer's home on Church Street. Two flights of steps lead up to a two-bedroom, one-bathroom apartment, which Bernheimer shares with her guests (and her Siamese cat).

The guest bedroom has a double bed, dresser, and bookcases, plus a view of the outside deck, full of potted geraniums, impatiens, and petunias. The deck is accessible through Bernheimer's room, and deck stairs descend to a small garden and patio, which guests are welcome to use.

The living room has hardwood floors, a Steinway grand piano, and an easy chair next to the fireplace. Guests are invited to make themselves comfortable here as well.

Bernheimer serves breakfast every morning from 7:30 to 9 a.m. In addition to her famous Swedish pancakes and giant popovers, the menu includes juice, fruit, tea, and coffee. "I love to visit over breakfast," says Bernheimer. "I wouldn't do this if I couldn't get to know the guests." She has entertained visitors from all over the world, and has often been invited to the homes of those who want to return the favor.

Bernheimer has a collection of maps and books about San Francisco, and says she is an excellent tour adviser for offbeat activities like the Mission District Mural Walk.

She charges \$70 per night with a three-night minimum and two-week maximum stay. Sorry, no children. May through October is her busiest season, and booking ahead is advised.

Hilltop Guest House

Diamond Street near 21st Street

Contact: Sandi Risser at 285-7189

This elegant home, built in 1941, was renovated four years ago by owner Sandi Risser to create separate living quarters for her guests. The Hilltop's entrance is a bright foyer with windows looking onto

Continued on Next Page

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Uncovering the Neighborhood's Guest Houses

Continued from Previous Page

a small patio garden. Up a flight of steps are the living room, dining room, and kitchen, which are shared by the Hilltop's two guest suites.

The living and dining areas are surrounded by windows with views of downtown and are tastefully decorated with period pieces: an early 1900s Victrola that belonged to Risser's grandparents, an antique secretary with San Francisco tour books and maps, and a baby grand piano. There are two comfortable settees in front of a working fireplace, and a granite dining table and chairs at the far end of the room.

Off the dining area is a small kitchen with the original tile floor, and a breakfast nook with a view of Twin Peaks. The kitchen has all the major appliances, and Risser supplies staples such as tea, flour, sugar, olive oil, spices, and paper products. She does not provide breakfast, so her guests shop for and prepare their own food (or eat out).

Down the hall from the living room is the "Sunroom Suite," a large room with a queen-size bed, overstuffed chairs, and its own corner sunroom complete with chaise lounge and skylight. The bathroom has a toilet and sink, and the shower is across the hall in a shared laundry room.

Downstairs, the "Garden Suite" features a private entrance, a small living room with a futon bed, a kitchenette with microwave, a bathroom and shower, and a back bedroom with a double bed and portable space heater. French doors off the living room open to the front garden.

Each suite has large walk-in closets, a private phone, and cable television. The house is a four-block walk from 24th Street, and a short distance from either the 35-Eureka or 24-Divisadero bus.

Risser charges by the week: \$300 for one adult and \$325 for two. Her monthly rate is \$1,200 for one and \$1,250 for two.

"Our average guest stays two weeks visiting family and friends in the neighborhood. I also get a lot of business people who are here for meetings, or people who are relocating and need to house-hunt," Risser says many of her guests come back, "some five or six times."

Spare Room

30th Street between Sanchez and Noe
Contact: Judy Berg at 282-2550

For travelers on a budget who don't mind strolling two blocks to Church Street to buy their own breakfast at Hungry Joe's or Cafe J, the Spare Room is a real bargain.



The dolls are sweet in the Sunroom Suite at Sandi Risser's Hilltop Guest House on Diamond near 21st Street.

Photo by Beverly Thorp



Guests who stay in the Penthouse at Noe's Nest on 23rd Street can stroll out to a garden deck or recline in the company of charming aquatic animals.

Photo by Beverly Thorp

Owner Judy Berg offers a bedroom with a private entrance at the back of her Victorian-style house. A short set of steps leads up to a small patio/garden and into a small bedroom. The room has a double bed, dresser, and desk, and a space heater for cold nights. Another door off the bedroom leads to a small side porch, also for guest use. To access the recently remodeled bathroom and shower, guests must go back outside—the entrance is halfway down the stairs.

Berg charges \$45 for one night and \$40 per night for two nights or more, with a one-week limit. June, July, and August are her busy times. "We like people to come by and look at the space before renting it if they can, because it's unusual. It works well for some people, but not for everyone."

Berg has quite a lot of guests from other countries, including Canada, Mexico, and Switzerland.

The Hidden Cottage

1186 Noe St., near 25th Street
Contact: Dave or Ginger Cannata at 282-4492

This two-story white Victorian was originally a farmhouse built in 1870, back when the valley was a dairy farm. Owners Dave and Ginger Cannata, who live in the farmhouse with their two children, offer a room at the back of the house with plenty of peace and quiet.

A footpath winds around the side of the house and through a garden full of impatiens, roses, and plum trees. A wooden staircase ascends to a light and airy bedroom with a skylight. The bedroom has a queen-size cast-iron bed, a restored oak dresser, comfy chairs, a ceiling fan, a television and VCR, private phone, and two closets. The large bathroom has marble floors, a skylight, and an inviting double tub. A deck off the bedroom features potted ferns, chairs, an outdoor shower, and lots of privacy.

Breakfast includes coffee, tea, croissants, and fresh fruit delivered in a picnic basket.

Dave Cannata says that while many of his guests have neighborhood connections, he has seen an increase in European visitors because of recent write-ups in travel books. "We also have quite a lot of repeat guests," says Cannata. "We had a couple who first visited when their daughter had a baby, and they came back recently for the birth of her second child."

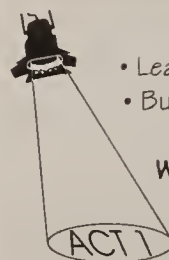
The room is generally booked a month in advance, and April through August is prime time. Double-occupancy rates are \$150 for one night, and \$125 per night for two nights or more. The room limit is two people, and private parking is available.

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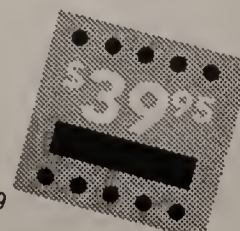
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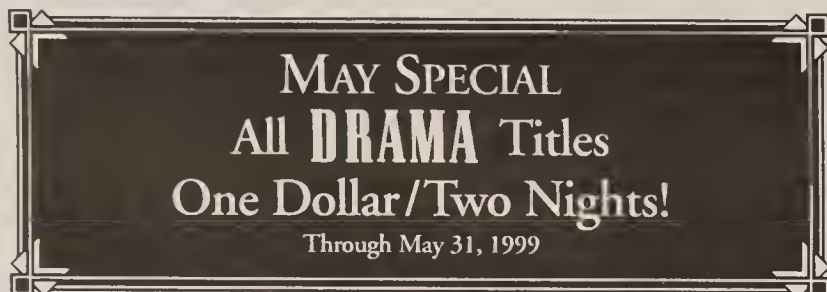
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A Bevy of B&Bs

Continued from Previous Page

Noe's Nest

3973 23rd St., near Noe Street

Contact: Sheila Robinson or Cindy Thomson at 821-0751

If you're looking for a place with lots of interaction, try Noe's Nest—there are always visitors coming and going. Owner Sheila Robinson has turned her home into a B&B, and she welcomes guests as part of the family.

Robinson says many of her guests are older parents visiting family in the neighborhood. She makes an extra effort to make them feel welcome, chatting over coffee, offering discounts from 24th Street merchants, and occasionally showing them around the city.

The main floor of the house, including the kitchen and common area, is decorated with a mix of Aboriginal masks, Japanese furniture, antiques, and family photographs.

Breakfast is served from 7:30 to 11 a.m. on the front enclosed deck, and usually includes fruit, lox and bagels, cream cheese, quiche, and pancakes. (Guests' family and friends are welcome to join in for \$5 per person.)

Each of the five guest rooms has a theme. The smallest is the "Oriental Room" at the front of the house, which has a queen bed, a Japanese-style lacquered desk, oriental rugs, and a sleeping loft over the bathroom and closet.

The larger "Garden Room" at the back of the house has a fold-out couch, queen bed, a working fireplace, and a picture window with a view of the garden. A large bathroom with a tub and shower also looks out to the garden, and after a bath you can stroll out to a private deck. The patio garden below has a hot tub accessible to guests through an enclosed alleyway on the side of the house.

The garden also has a new guest room, the fun and funky "Tree House," whose floor and walls are covered in leopard print. It has a queen-size bed, a bathroom with shower, and skylights. Back through the enclosed alleyway is the "French Room," which sleeps two and offers its own private entrance.

Upstairs are two more rooms: the "Castaway Room," featuring a 1920s-style brass bed and a window seat, and the "Penthouse Suite," boasting a steam room, king-size bed, corner fireplace, washer and dryer, and a full deck with a view of Noe Valley.

Each room has its own bath, cable television, VCR, and private phone. Rates are \$95 to \$170 per night double-occupancy, with \$10 added for each additional person. Reservations are recommended. "Booking six months ahead is not too early if there is a particular room you

want," says manager Cindy Thomson, "though we are able to take last-minute reservations when we have an opening."

The Victorian Garden

26th Street near Noe

The Edwardian

27th Street near Church

Contact: R. Geikow at 206-0202

If you're looking for a cozy apartment with all the amenities of home, you'll be pleased with either the Victorian Garden or the Edwardian, two guest houses owned by Noe Valley resident R. Geikow.

The Victorian Garden has a street-level entrance at the side of a charming Victorian on 26th Street. The house itself has a full-time tenant, while the in-law apartment is used for guests.

"I liked the idea of a B&B as an alternative to renting the apartment full-time," says Geikow. "It gives me the freedom to use the space when I need it for my own friends and family, and I can book guests when it works with my schedule."

The apartment is full of mementos from the owner's travels—pottery from Portugal, a soap dish from England, watercolors from Ukraine. The bedroom has a queen-size bed, closet, desk, armchair, and private phone. The shower-only bathroom features colorful Mexican tiles.

Off the bedroom is a galley kitchen with a full set of dishes and all major appliances. Guests make their own breakfast from a pantry stocked with cereals, bread, oatmeal, and even pancake mix. Milk, yogurt, and fruit are in the fridge.

An informal living room has comfortable furniture, a television and VCR, and a large picture window that overlooks the garden. An outside patio offers a table and chairs and a gas grill for barbecuing.

The Edwardian is a ground-level apartment on 27th Street with a more formal living room—with hardwood floors, upholstered furniture, cable television, stereo, private phone, and a large sofa that converts to a queen sleeper.

A fully equipped kitchen is large enough to accommodate a pantry and a dining table and chairs. At the back of the apartment is a light and airy bedroom with a queen-size canopy bed and a view of the garden. The bathroom, which includes a shower and tub, was recently retiled with handpainted Italian tiles.

In the garden, Geikow grows tomatoes, squash, and other vegetables interspersed with climbing jasmine, miniature roses, and red fuchsia bushes.

The rate for both B&Bs is \$110 per night, double-occupancy, with a two-night minimum. The charge for an additional guest is \$25 per night, and children are welcome.

The Edwardian and Victorian Garden are busy year-round, and Geikow suggests booking six to eight weeks ahead for weekend stays. The majority of his guests are seniors or parents of Noe Valley residents, and his neighbors often refer guests to him. "We've now been in the business long enough that we have people returning, sometimes six or seven times," Geikow says. □

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STORE TREK

By Jim Christie

Storetrek is a regular *Noe Valley Voice* beat, covering new shops and businesses in the neighborhood. This month's Storetrek introduces a new fish and pet supplies store and a dry cleaner's on 24th Street, plus a gift shop and real estate firm near Noe's Bar at Church and 24th.

Tropical Island Pet Shop 4190 24th St. (near Diamond) 647-7789

There are a couple of new "pet shop boys" in Noe Valley — partners Steve Tang and Kenneth Yu opened Tropical Island Pet Shop in early April, next door to the Diamond Corner Cafe on 24th Street (where the short-lived Used Book Company was).

Actually, Messrs. Tang and Yu aren't really new to the neighborhood. You might recognize Kenneth Yu because he's been a waiter at Tien Fu (3945 24th St.) for nine years. As a matter of fact, he's still at it. Steve Tang is a familiar presence on 24th Street as well—he worked at B-Tech Aquarium (now closed) for two years, and has a total of eight years' experience in the aquatic animals business. Both are long-term San Francisco residents who currently live in the Crocker-Amazon neighborhood.

Tropical Island Pet Shop carries fish and reptile tanks, aquarium supplies and filtration systems, salt- and freshwater fish, amphibians, and reptiles (and crickets to feed to them). The store also has dog and cat food supplies, toys, collars, flea treatments, and cats' scratching posts.

There's a grand opening sale going on now, with 60-gallon, black-backed fish tanks offered for \$169, 30- to 34-gallon tanks for around \$50, and 10-gallon reptile tanks for \$25. Butterfly Tail and Red Lionhead fish are \$4; Chinese Fighting Fish are \$3; small, medium, and large Orandas are \$3, \$6, and \$16 respectively; and Gouramis range from \$4 to \$6.

In the reptile department, Water Dragon lizards run \$20 to \$30, iguanas and turtles can walk out the door for \$15, and pythons are slithering away for \$60. Those tasty crickets are 20 for a buck.

Tropical Island Pet Shop is open Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., and Sundays from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Makras Real Estate San Francisco Marketing 1193 Church St. (near 24th) 282-8400

Soon after Carroll's Books closed its Church Street location last summer to move to North Beach, the building's owner, Victor Makras, decided to renovate the interior and make it his firms' headquarters.

Makras Real Estate and San Francisco Marketing (a separate Makras-owned company) now occupy the spacious quarters, the exterior of which has been painted yellow ocher and accented with Greco-Roman statuary.

Makras Real Estate is a full-service real estate office that handles residential and commercial listings and also offers property management services. San Francisco Marketing is dedicated to the sales and promotion of larger projects, usually buildings with six units or more. An example is the South of Market complex at 920 Harrison St., which contains 14 live-work lofts.

Victor Makras and his associates are busy these days, as are most realtors in San Francisco's white-hot housing mar-



Customer Kelli Freytes is mesmerized by the Ball Boa at Tropical Island Pet Shop on 24th Street. Photo by Charles Kennard

ket, but Makras did take the time to extend his greetings: "We like Noe Valley a lot, and we're very pleased to be here."

Makras Real Estate is open weekdays from 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m., and on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. (The offices are closed Sundays.)



Moptic, Maria Carranza's cubbyhole on Church Street near 24th, is full of decorative knickknacks. Photo by Charles Kennard

Moptic 1185 Church St. (near 24th) 642-7152

Right next door to Makras Real Estate is one of its commercial tenants: Moptic. The gift gallery opened in May 1998, after proprietor Maria Carranza decided to move from her original Glen Park location. Now her business is only a few blocks away from her Church Street residence, where she and her husband have lived for five years.

Moptic still offers the same eclectic assortment of knickknacks from *Pleasantville*: hand-me-downs in good condition; vintage jewelry, kitchenware, umbrellas, vases, toys, doll furniture, linens, pillows, and luggage; plus new jewelry, some of it fashioned by local artists. Carranza also carries Mexican photo art cards, as well as her own line of Moptic greeting cards in a variety of designs. (Carranza says she got the name Moptic by placing the "M" from her first name in front of the word "optic.")

A quick look at her wares reveals that earrings are priced from \$10 to \$80, suitcases range from \$25 to \$60, vintage purses are \$20 to \$30, and greeting cards are \$2 to \$3. Carranza's own line of cards are \$14 for eight. There's also an extensive selection of '50s china and glassware, with plates ranging from \$14 to \$40, and four-piece place settings averaging around \$95.

Drop in for a visit — you might even

see Easter and Daisy, Carranza's two pet lop-eared rabbits.

Moptic is open Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday from noon to 6 p.m., Saturday from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Sunday from noon to 5 p.m. The shop is closed Mondays and Tuesdays.

Bay Castle Cleaners 3906 24th St. (near Sanchez) 970-8210

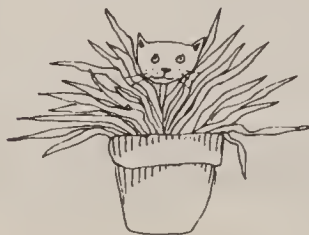
A new dry cleaning establishment opened in downtown Noe Valley in February. Bay Castle Cleaners is located on 24th Street near Sanchez, in the storefront next door to the old (and still vacant) Cover to Cover Booksellers. The shop sports an orange neon sign that blazes in the window at night.

Here's a sampling of Bay Castle's dry cleaning prices: Long coats, dresses, and men's and women's two-piece suits are \$6. Pants, jackets, sweaters, blouses, and shirts are \$3, and vests and ties are \$1.50.

Laundered shirts are \$1.20 and wash & fold laundry costs 60 cents per pound. (The shop does alterations, too.) Bay Castle is currently offering a 30-percent-off "Grand Opening Special."

Whether your clothes need cleaning or not, drop in and say hi to Irene, the smiling and helpful woman behind the counter on weekdays. (The store owners declined to be interviewed.)

Bay Castle Cleaners is open Monday through Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



Dirty Carpets?

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO CLEAN YOUR carpet? Are you confused among steam, chem-dry, dry powder, shampoo, and the other cleaning methods? How often should upholstery be cleaned? And what about Oriental rugs?

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If that carpet becomes uncleanable, A&G can help you obtain new carpet at the lowest available cost. "We order direct from the mills, and don't have a store overhead to pay, so we can pass on the savings to our clients," says Milgram.

In draperies and upholstered pieces, the fabric is always pretested before cleaning. "Unless we are certain of good results, we will not take on any job. A 100% money-back guarantee always accompanies our work. If you're not happy, you don't pay."

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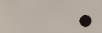
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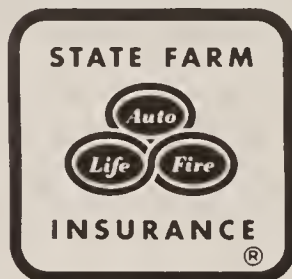


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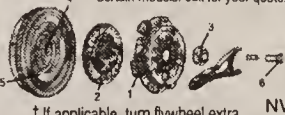
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Let BYLINES Be BYLINES

Compost Yourself

By Mary J. Karraker

Editor's Note: This essay on composting may look familiar. That's because we tried to publish it last month. Unfortunately, we lopped off about six paragraphs in production—long about where the "red wigglers" came in. Please accept our apologies, and enjoy the entire story from start to finish.

Several months ago I visited one of my daughters, who lives in Arcata. She has a nice house and yard. As we strolled around the yard, she revealed that she had started composting, "just like Dad did."

You can imagine my horror when I went to look at her compost pile and found hotdog buns, bones, and corn husks and ears lying about the pile. They had been untouched by the process. So I grabbed a shovel and began throwing the offending victuals from the enclosure. I also took it upon myself to turn, feed, and water the pile. There were not too many worms, but far too many sow bugs...a bad sign. After giving explicit instructions, I left my daughter to the task.



Earlier in this century, I was married to Dave, a disciple of the visionary Euell Gibbons, who when he wasn't *Stalking the Blue-Eyed Scallop*, ...the *Wild Asparagus*, or ...the *Wild Herbs*, was writing for the periodical *Organic Gardening*. Euell felt that with all that stalking, you could live off the land and take good care of it at the same time.

When Dave, who worked for the National Park Service, was transferred to Washington State (Port Angeles), we jumped into gardening in a big way. We

lived on an acre and a half of fertile loam and third-growth timber, nestled among the banana slugs. In the wild areas of our hillside property grew blueberries, red huckleberries, salmon berries, and thimble berries. The garden held strawberries and raspberries galore. We tried growing all kinds of vegetables, from potatoes to Dave's beloved Brussels sprouts. Due to the cool wet weather, not all of our projects flourished. But we sorted that out and lived well from the fruits of our toil.

After the rainfall, the next greatest hazards were our two chipmunk-cheeked daughters, who with an over-riding affinity for mud, liked to help. Try as I might, I couldn't convince them that the gentle, horizontal movement of garden tools was preferable to the vertical chop. I had never before looked at a child's garden rake as the staff of the Grim Reaper, but there you are.

With such a large garden and lawn, we found ourselves with an abundance of waste plant material. As Euell had advised, composting was the answer.

After a rainstorm, the compost would get soaked and heavy, making it difficult to turn. During the winter it was like stirring cold oatmeal. Just when we had the hang of it and things seemed to be "cooking," we were transferred to the suburbs of Washington, D.C.

On the East Coast, the weather was hot and humid, and the compost flourished. We added a chubby-cheeked boy to our gardening-by-mayhem crew, and continued to cultivate with gusto. We

had two gardens and numerous flower beds, so there was fuel for the compost pile, which eventually became three. As with eating peanuts, we just couldn't stop.



People often have the wrong idea about composting. If the pile is properly cared for, it decomposes all manner of plant materials, including paper. It also provides excellent garden soil. And it doesn't smell.

As for earthworms, think of the compost pile as a condo for night crawlers and red wigglers. (They do make turning the pile with a shovel a little gruesome, but a digging fork minimizes the damage.) Worms are the compost's greatest little helpers. As they help break down the vegetation, they aerate the soil and leave behind fertilizer-rich castings.

Piles must be watered and fed, along with being turned. You can also take the internal temperature to see if they are cooking properly. Part of the secret of composting is to add enough (but not too much) green material, which produces heat as it breaks down inside the pile. Of course, Dave and I had an especially long thermometer for checking on this important activity. I can't recall the optimum temperature, but it was up around 140 degrees.

One couldn't get too carried away with the greens, however, and the material had to be dry as you mixed it in, so it wouldn't clump. Many an unfortunate gardener has unwittingly thrown all of his green grass clippings into the pile,

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only to return later and find the clump still sitting there, undigested, like a fossil from a prehistoric mowing.

So composting is a science, not for the faint of heart. It isn't just ashes to ashes and dust to dust. The mechanism is more complex than that. You must know what you are doing. No matter how tasty the table scraps might be, you must be discerning about casting them into the pile. No bones or corn husks!



Which brings me back to the beginning of this saga. When I returned to my daughter's house several months later, she proudly showed me her revitalized compost pile. She excitedly described how the worms had drilled through the tea bags and coffee filters and tunneled through the leftover squash. (Since she is a vegetarian, she had no shortage of materials for the pile.) She then pointed to the small, edible potatoes that had sprouted from the peelings she had deposited.

Later, as I headed back to San Francisco, I thought about my small apartment on Elizabeth Street. I am able to recycle, but I don't see much chance of gardening in my future. I will be mightily tempted, however, if Tuggey's Hardware ever starts offering those sleek, black, Darth Vader-looking composters. □

Mary "Jeff" Karraker has been a U.S. park ranger for 23 years. She currently works as a supervisor at Alcatraz Island. Originally from Colorado, she now makes her home in Noe Valley.

A Recipe for Composting

- ✿ Dig a hole, 1 to 2 feet deep and 3 to 4 feet wide. (Or buy a plastic compost bin. SLUG and Cole Hardware are offering the "Earth Machine" for \$19.99.)
- ✿ Remove pieces of sod, rocks, and twigs from the soil you have dug up.
- ✿ Put leaves, grass clippings, organic kitchen waste (such as salad leftovers, vegetable peels, and egg shells), coffee grounds, and tea bags into the hole. For your health's sake, don't add dog or cat droppings or kitty litter.
- ✿ Sprinkle a thin layer of dirt over the pile, and water it lightly. Continue to layer each time you add scraps. Water if needed. The pile should be kept moist, but not so damp that mold grows. Always end up with a layer of dirt on top.
- ✿ In about three weeks, dig into the edges of the pile and turn it over on itself. Look to see what wondrous things have sprouted.

—Mary J. Karraker

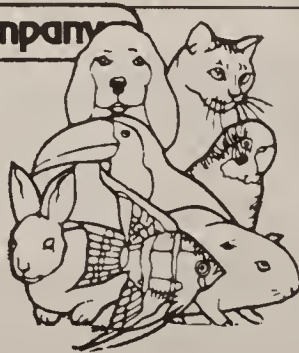
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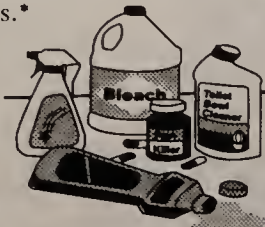


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SHORT TAKES

30 Years of Pampers

Did you or someone you know attend the Noe Valley Cooperative Nursery School? The school is calling all past and present alumni, to come celebrate its 30th anniversary.

The nursery school, housed in the Noe Valley Ministry at 1021 Sanchez St., will host a grown-ups only anniversary party on May 21 from 7 to 11 p.m. Then there will be a picnic the next day, May 22, for families and their children.

If you are an alum and have not yet received a survey from the school, please call co-op president Caroline Scott at (415) 563-6238 to give her your current address and phone number.

The party will also launch an exhibit of 14 glorious quilts created by parents at the school. Many have been raffle prizes displayed in storefront windows on 24th Street over the years. The show will run through June 11 at the church. Call the Ministry at 282-2317 for more information, or the nursery school at 647-2278.

Music on Mother's Day

How better to spend Mother's Day than to soak up some jazz and classical music in an intimate neighborhood venue? The Noe Valley Chamber Music Series presents "Pursuit of Excellence," a concert performed by students and faculty from Community Music Center (CMC), on Sunday, May 9, at 2:30 p.m.

The free program includes everything from Baroque flute music from Europe to Guzheng music from ancient China. The CMC Jazz Band and Inner City Young Musicians will also play sets. Advanced chamber music ensembles, the Collegium Musicum, and a Bulgarian women's a cappella group round out the program, which will be held in the upstairs sanctuary at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St.

For further details on the concert, call the CMC at 647-6015.

SLUG's Open Garden Day

Now that spring is here for real, it's the perfect time to visit some of the many flourishing school and community gardens in the area, with knowledgeable tour guides leading the way.

On Saturday, May 22, you can take a free tour—by bus, by bike, or on foot—of community gardens on "Open Garden Day," an event sponsored by the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners (SLUG) and the Center for Urban Education About Sustainable Agriculture.

"A Walking Tour of Mission Gardens" will explore hidden pockets of nature you may have missed in the Mission District. That tour starts at the Dolores Street Garden at 15th and Dolores streets at 11 a.m.

Meanwhile, a city garden bicycle tour, co-sponsored by the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition, meets at 19th and Dolores (also at 11 a.m.).

Or if buses are more your style, you can take a San Francisco gardens tour by catching the bus at St. Mary's Urban Youth Farm on Alemany Boulevard at Ellsworth at 10:45 a.m. There is also a school bus tour of outdoor classrooms, which will meet at Alice Fong Yu Alternative School at 1541 12th Ave. at 11 a.m.

To reserve a seat on any of the tours, or for a free map of Open Garden Day sites, call SLUG at (415) 285-7584.



The Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School has been swinging for 30 years. So the kids, parents, and alumni are celebrating with a party and picnic May 21 and 22.



Secret Gardens Revealed

Ten breathtaking San Francisco private gardens, including three in Noe Valley, will be open for touring on Sunday, May 23, as part of a benefit for the STOP AIDS Project of San Francisco. The gardens represent the work of local landscape architects and avid gardeners, and are not normally open to the public.

The garden of a Marina District home will also host a champagne reception, with wines and delicious food from San Francisco restaurants. This particular garden happens to be where the treaty ending the war with Japan was signed.

All proceeds from the event will support the group's HIV prevention program for gay and bisexual men. The tour costs \$40 per person and will last from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. The champagne reception will be held from 3 to 5 p.m. Attending both the tour and the reception costs \$75.

For advance tickets and information call either (415) 864-8523 or (415) 252-1967. For tickets on May 23, go to 4547 19th St. (at Douglass).

Food Drive Goes Postal

Letter carriers will be collecting food from San Francisco residents on Saturday, May 8, in a nationwide food drive for families in need. You'll soon be getting a flyer in your mailbox, asking you to leave canned food and nonperishable items by your mailbox the morning of the 8th.

The Post Office will deliver all the food the carriers collect locally to the San Francisco Food Bank, where it will be sorted and distributed. Last year, nearly a million pounds of food were collected across the country in just one day.

"This annual food drive is so important in helping to feed the more than 90,000 low-income children and families living with the threat of hunger in San Francisco," said Paul Ash, executive director of the Food Bank.

Canned or packaged items such as tuna, beans, rice and pasta, canned soups and stews, canned fruit and vegetables, peanut butter, and cereal are your best bet. Please remember not to include glass or perishable items.

The food drive is being organized by the National Association of Letter Carriers, in conjunction with the U.S. Postal Service, the AFL-CIO, and the United Way. To contact the San Francisco Food Bank, call (415) 282-1900.





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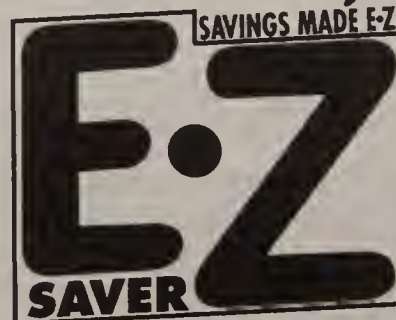
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MAY 1999

MAY 1-JUNE 20: The EDGE FESTIVAL 1999 features choreography from innovative dance artists. Dancers' Group Studio Theater, 3221 22nd St. Call 824-5044 for a program schedule.

MAY 1-JUNE 30: "GAY IMAGES in Mixed Media, 1938 to the Present" exhibits visual and literary artifacts, including early coverage in *Look*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*. Eureka Valley Library, 3555 16th St. 554-9445.

MAY 4, 11 & 25: Preschoolers 3 to 5 are invited to STORY TIME at the Noe Valley Library. 10 am. 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

MAY 4-25: The 30th Street Senior Center hosts Tuesday Latin, swing, and BALLROOM DANCE classes. 2 pm. Room 325, 225 30th St. 550-2221.

MAY 5: The Adventist HEALTH VAN offers free blood pressure testing and low-cost cholesterol screening. 10 am-4 pm. Bell Market lot. 775-2570.

MAY 5, 12 & 26: The Noe Valley Library hosts LAPSITS for infants, toddlers, and their parents beginning at 7 pm. 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

MAY 6-JUNE 6: *Fed Up: A Cannibal's Own Story* is "a burlesque, a love story, and an exorcism in two acts." Wed.-Sat., 8 pm; Sun., 7 pm. Theater Rhinoceros, 2926 16th St. 552-4100.

MAY 7: The MANRING/KASSIN/DARTER trio plays a concert of musical improvisation at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.



Guitar and oud players Tarik and Julia Banzi will be among the expert strummers at International Guitar Night at the Noe Valley Ministry on Saturday, May 22.

MAY 8: The Fair Oaks Neighbors Street Fair and FLEA MARKET runs on Fair Oaks from 21st to 26th Street, and offers finds, food, and fun. 9 am-4 pm.

MAY 8: The Mission Branch Library's GRAND REOPENING CELEBRATION features family story time in English at 11 am and Spanish at noon, outdoor festivities and a ceremony at 12:30 pm, and an afternoon of poetry and music. 24th & Bartlett. 557-4277 or 695-5090.

MAY 8: Gerald Schiller signs his new MYSTERY, *Death Underground*. 1-2 pm. San Francisco Mystery Bookstore, 4175 24th St. 282-7444.

MAY 8: A fundraising ART AUCTION to benefit Bethany Methodist Church features door prizes and champagne and hors d'oeuvres. 6 pm. Park Hill Chapel, 355 Buena Vista East. 647-8393.

MAY 8: An international BEER FESTIVAL benefits the Telegraph Hill Cooperative Nursery School. 7:30-10:30 pm. Herbst Pavilion, Fort Mason. 421-3313.

MAY 8: Noe Valley writer Andrea Alban Gosline and painter/illustrator Lisa Burnett Bossi celebrate the launch of their *Mother's Nature: Timeless Wisdom for the Journey into MOTHERHOOD*, with a book signing and reading at 7 pm. Cover to Cover, 3812 24th St. 282-8080.

MAY 8: JAZZ VOCALIST Barbara Lynn (who can scat in Czech) performs with her trio at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

MAY 8, 9, 15 & 16: The Performing Artists Group at City College performs Carlo Collodi's comedy, *PINOCCHIO*. Sat. & Sun., 11 am & 1 pm. Black Box Theater, Phelan & Judson. 285-8476.

MAY 9: A worker for Jerry Falwell before he "came out," Marc Adams speaks at the Mother's Day meeting of P-FLAG. 2-4 pm. St. Francis Church, 152 Church St. 921-8850.

MAY 9: A "Pursuit of Excellence" CONCERT by Community Music Center students features jazz, classical, Bulgarian, and Chinese music. 2:30 pm. Noe Valley Chamber Music Series, Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 647-6015.

MAY 9, JUNE 14: The Golden Gate Men's Chorus performs Renaissance, folk songs, and gospel music at "Now We Sing the City," a series of CONCERTS at city landmarks. 7 pm. May 9: Mission Dolores Basilica, Dolores & 16th. June 14: City Hall Rotunda. Tickets at Community Box Office, 400 Castro St. (863-4472), or call 668-GMCM.

MAY 9: Sunday Night EVENSONG is a healing service of chants, silent meditation, and prayer. 7 pm. Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 282-2317.

MAY 9 & 13: Celebrate Bike to Work Month at a BIKING WORKSHOP, "Getting a Grip," featuring safety and basic skills; bring your bike. Sun., 10 am; Thurs., 6 pm. 1839 15th St. 431-2453.

MAY 11: DOG OWNERS interested in the future of off-leash recreation are invited to a meeting of the Parks and Recreation Committee of the Board of Supervisors. 1-3 pm. City Hall. Call Amos Brown, 554-7601, for room number, or Noe Courts Coalition, 675-0110.

MAY 11, 12 & 16: Teen Summer Musical Theater Workshop AUDITIONS for two musical productions are scheduled for 4 to 6:30 pm Tues. and Wed., and 1 to 5 pm on Sunday. Harvey Milk Rec Center, 50 Scott St. 554-9523.



The Golden Gate Men's Chorus will celebrate its 17th season with a series of concerts at city landmarks, including Mission Dolores Basilica on May 9. Photo by Freddie Niem.

MAY 12: A Glen Park NEIGHBORHOOD HISTORY slide show and talk by Patricia Duff, a City Guides tour leader, begins at 7:30 pm. Glen Park Recreation Center in Glen Canyon Park. 337-4740.

MAY 14: T. Jefferson Parker signs his new MYSTERY, *The Blue Hour*. 1-2 pm. San Francisco Mystery Bookstore, 4175 24th St. 282-7444.

MAY 14: Noe Street photographer Robert Dawson signs copies of *Farewell, Promised Land: Waking from the California Dream*. 7-9 pm. Cover to Cover, 3812 24th St. 282-8080.

MAY 14, 15, 16, 22 & 23: Shanti holds a two-weekend training for volunteers giving practical and emotional support to people with HIV/AIDS. Call Maureen Smith, 674-4722.

MAY 15: The Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Improvement Association and the Noe Courts Coalition co-sponsor a Noe Courts CLEAN-UP as part of the Mayor's Clean Sweep Day. 9 am-noon. Wear work gloves; refreshments provided. 24th & Douglass. 824-4680.

MAY 15: Ingleside Terrace's neighborhood-wide GARAGE SALE offers treasures for all. Start at Junipero Serra and Mercedes. 9 am-4 pm.

MAY 15: BUG DAY features firefly chats, bees at work, maggot races, and edible insects. 10 am-3 pm. Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way. 554-9600.

MAY 15: A PICNIC-N-PLAY Day at Walter Haas Park offers food, music, entertainment, kids' activities, and contests. 11 am-3 pm. Addison St. at Diamond Heights Blvd. 586-3443.

MAY 15: A MURAL AWARENESS FESTIVAL at Precita Park features hands-on activities and a performance honoring mural award recipients. 1-5 pm. Precita & Folsom. 285-2287.

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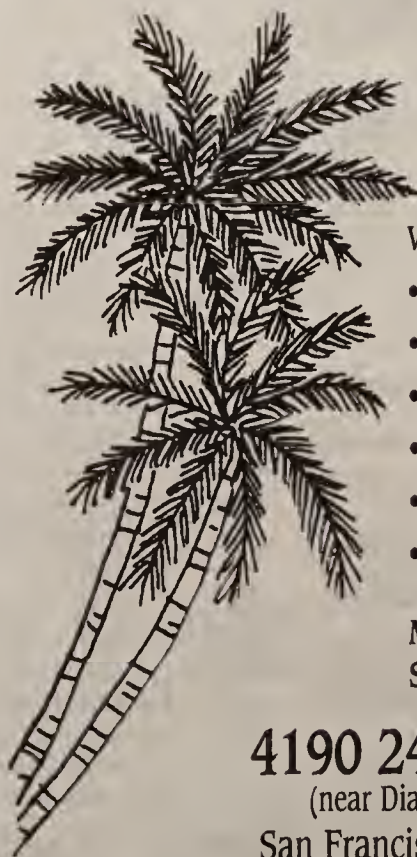
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CALENDAR

MAY 15: Celebrate MYSTERY WEEK with four writers, Janet Dawson, Rhys Bowen, Bob Judd, and Barbara Scott. 2-3 pm. San Francisco Mystery Bookstore, 4175 24th St. 282-7444.

MAY 15: SoVoSo a cappella SEXTET performs at 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

MAY 16: The Sanchez Street STORY SWAP features Greg Begin. 2:30-4:30 pm. 1589 Sanchez St. 647-7455.

MAY 16 & 22: Male vocal ensemble CHANTICLEER performs "Music and Our Search for Meaning: Mysticism of the Spanish Renaissance." Sun., 7 pm; Sat., 8 pm. Mission Dolores Basilica, 16th & Dolores. 896-5866.

MAY 18: FILMS for children 3 to 5 are shown at 10 and 11 am. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

MAY 18: The San Francisco Prep Hall of Fame honors six athletes at a banquet, including Noe Valley's BOB ST. CLAIR, a former 49er and '49 student at Polytechnic High School in Santa Rosa. 6:15 pm. Patio Español Restaurant, 2850 Alemany Blvd. For required reservations, call Saul Madfes, 566-6712.

MAY 19: A MUSIC program by Becky Desroches features rhythm instruments, stories, singing, and dancing for children up to 7 years old. 7 pm. Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St. 695-5095.

MAY 21 & 22: The Noe Valley Co-op Nursery School hosts a 30th anniversary CELEBRATION for grownups May 21, 7 to 11 pm, and a picnic for families and children on May 22. For information, call Caroline Scott at 563-6238.

MAY 21-23: Start the millennium early at St. Kevin's annual PARISH FESTIVAL, "Farewell Nineties," featuring games, booths, and food for all ages. Fri. and Sat., 6:30 pm; Sun., 1 pm. Ellsworth & Cortland. 648-5751.

MAY 22: A GARAGE SALE at St. Aidan's Episcopal Church benefits youth community service. 9 am-4 pm. 101 Gold Mine Drive in Diamond Hts. 285-9540.

MAY 22: It's Open GARDEN Day, sponsored by the San Francisco League of Urban Gardeners. For a guide to walking, bike, and bus tours, call 285-7584.

MAY 22: Double your bargains at the Mothers of Twins' GARAGE SALE. 9 am-3 pm. St. John of God, 5th Ave. & Irving.

MAY 22: International GUITAR NIGHT features the folk, jazz, and classical acoustic guitar sounds of Andrew York, Antonio Calogero, Brian Gore, and Tarik and Julia Banzi. 8:15 pm. Noe Valley Music Series at the Noe Valley Ministry, 1021 Sanchez St. 454-5238.

MAY 22 & 23: The S.F. Zoo docents' WHITE ELEPHANT SALE benefits the Education Center scheduled to open next year. 10 am-4 pm. Enter free at Herbst Rd, off Skyline Blvd. 753-7052.

MAY 23: The San Francisco GARDEN TOUR benefits the Stop AIDS Project. 11 am-4 pm. Meet at 4547 19th St. or call 252-1967 for reservations.

MAY 23: Miraloma Cooperative Nursery School's Spring CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL features family entertainment and a barbecue lunch. 11 am-4 pm. Sunnyside Park on Foerster, two blocks north of Monterey Blvd. 585-6789.

MAY 23: MYSTERY WRITERS Larry Karp (*The Music Box Murders*) and Sandra Levy Ceren (*Prescription for Terror*) sign their books from 2 to 3 pm. San Francisco Mystery Bookstore, 4175 24th St. 282-7444.



Noe Valley sculptor Ruth Asawa—a co-founder of the School of the Arts—will be honored at a May 29 celebration featuring the Glide Kids Ensemble, drummer Michael Carvin, the Savage Jazz Dance Company, and the Multi-Ethnic Symphony Ensemble. Photo courtesy of Terry Schmitt.

MAY 23: The San Francisco Children's CHORUS' 25th Anniversary Celebration features a children's operetta, *Back to Another Time*. 3 pm. Community Music Center, 544 Capp St. 647-6015.

MAY 25: The Bay Area Alzheimer's Association offers SUPPORT GROUPS for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender caregivers. 7-9 pm. 30th Street Senior Services, 225 30th St. David Coon, (650) 493-5000, ext. 27778.

MAY 26: A BABYSITTING program begins at 3:30 pm at the Mission Library. 300 Bartlett St. 695-5090.

MAY 27: St. Luke's Hospital holds a HOME SAFETY class for seniors. 3-5 pm. 3555 Cesar Chavez. Reg. 641-6465.

MAY 27: Noe Valley Ministry pastor Keenan Kelsey will be a guest at the monthly meeting of UPPER NOE Neighbors. 7:30 pm. Upper Noe Recreation Center, Day & Sanchez. 285-0473.

MAY 29: Sculptor RUTH ASAWA will be honored along with many young artists at the first annual Artists' Celebration, an evening of dance, music, and spoken word sponsored by the Multi-Cultural Youth Artists' Organization. 8 pm. Herbst Theater, 401 Van Ness Ave. 392-4400.

June Calendar Deadline

The next issue of the *Noe Valley Voice* will be unfurled on June 2, and will cover calendar events for the month of June. We'd appreciate it if you'd send us your items by **May 15**.

Please mail your press releases to the *Noe Valley Voice* Calendar, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Or you can e-mail short items to jaxvoice@aol.com.

For calendar changes or questions, call Karol at 285-6347. Thanks for keeping us up to date.

MAY 30: The CARNAVAL San Francisco parade starts at 10 am at 24th and Bryant, progressing west on 24th then north on Mission. The festival, featuring three stages of music and dance, runs from 11 am to 6 pm on Harrison St. between 16th and 22nd. Mission Economic Cultural Association, 826-1401.

JUNE 5: Co-authors Andrea Alban Gosline and Lisa Burnett Bossi will lead a reading and discussion of their new collection, *Mother's Nature: Timeless Wisdom for the Journey into MOTHERHOOD*, featuring Isabel Allende, Maya Angelou, Simone de Beauvoir, Barbara Kingsolver, and others. 2 pm. Natural Resources, 1307 Castro St. 550-2611.

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SHORT TAKES

Fair Oaks Fair and Fleas

Get ready for the Fair Oaks Neighbors Street Fair and Flea Market on Saturday, May 8, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. There'll be five full blocks of garage sales, food, and fun, with special kids' events at Jamestown Community Center, 180 Fair Oaks.

The fair, a Noe Valley tradition now in its 23rd year, will run all along Fair Oaks Street from 21st to 26th Street. (Fair Oaks Street is the one that is parallel to Dolores Street, between Dolores and Guerrero.)

Please note that in case the fair is rained out on the 8th, the alternate date is Saturday, May 15.

Are 2 Wheels Better Than 4?

Bike to Work Day is coming up on Tuesday, May 18. You can save money, get exercise, and have some fun by getting away from the traffic congestion and Muni frustrations.

To put even more zip in your pedaling that day, the San Francisco Bicycle Coalition is sponsoring 11 "energizer stations" around town, with free treats and goodies for bicyclists only. At Valencia and 17th streets during the morning commute (7 to 9 a.m.), free coffee, juice, bagels, and tote bags can be had, and at Valencia and 18th streets during the evening commute (4:30 to 6:30 p.m.), free bike lights and helmet fittings will be available.

Once you get downtown, free valet bike parking all day will be provided at Market and Battery streets. If you're nervous going solo, join a "bike train" riding toward downtown in the morning.

Or if you're a little rusty on cycling, take advantage of the Coalition's Urban Biking Workshop on Sunday, May 9, at 10 a.m., or Thursday, May 13, at 6 p.m., rain or shine. The class will cover basic riding skills and safety tips. Bring your bike for the hands-on practice.

For details on the workshop or Bike to Work events, call (415) 431-BIKE, or check out www.sfbike.org.

'Three Strikes' Documentary

A documentary produced by 25th Street resident Michael J. Moore—*The Legacy: Murder & Media, Politics & Prisons*—will open May 17–20 at the Roxie Cinema on 16th Street. It also will be shown on KQED (Channel 9) on June 1 at 10 p.m.

The film traces the history of the controversial "Three Strikes" initiative, by exploring the relationship between Marc Klaas and Mike Reynolds, the two men whose daughters' murders led to the law's enactment in 1994. (Reynolds' daughter was shot and killed by a purse snatcher.)

"It also will inform the public about what the law really does," says Moore. "Few people know that 25 percent of all prisoners in California are now incarcerated under Three Strikes. And 79 percent of those are in for nonviolent crimes."

To find out about the premiere, call Porch Light Productions at 282-2303.

Radical Labor Conference

"I-99," an international labor conference co-sponsored by the Bay Area Workers Solidarity Alliance, will be held at New College of California, 741 Valencia St., June 1 through 5.

The goal of the conference is to rebuild the global grassroots labor movement and to open channels of communication between existing radical unions and organizations. "We hope that the common values of all members of the radical labor movement become clear through the course of the conference," said Deke Nihilson, one of I-99's organizers.

According to conference literature, "attendees will be asked to agree to three basic principles: The working class and the employing class have nothing in common. The working class should take over the economy. The working class must organize into unions to fight the capitalist class." For more information about the conference, call (415) 863-9627 or send e-mail to intl99@iww.org.

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Where You Wanted to Go Today

Scoop! The Voice readers editor has discovered why there's still the occasional parking space available in Noe Valley: A lot of our neighbors are parked at the airport. And others have taken their cars with them on journeys within California. As we enter the prime travel season, let's see if we can arrange not to return home all at once.



Kate and Andy Barrengos journeyed from Noe Street to Passau, Germany, last October.



While on a coffee-buying trip to Antigua, Guatemala, Noe native Phil Maloney caught a bit of the news from home after his bite at a tamale stand.



The Untourist himself: Voice writer Jim Christie checked out some of his back pages during a recent walk through Ho Chi Minh City in Vietnam.



Mickey and the Matterhorn were the main attractions, but Caitlin Fate found time to check out the Kids' Picks column.



Jean Denison, Amy and John Crichton of 21st Street, and a passel of working dogs checked out the real winter in Ely, Minnesota, this January.

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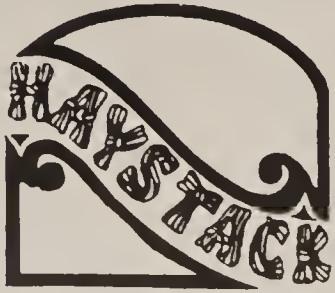
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More Readers Write



In March, Jillian Keegan, 4-year-old daughter of Krista and Gerry, traveled to Ireland to visit her grandparents on their farm in County Leitrim.



Brian and Marci Grossman relaxed and read up while visiting the Forbidden City in Beijing, China.



Last fall Ellen Harris spent two months in Guanajuato, Mexico, helping to run a bed and breakfast inn while polishing her Spanish. Once she was used to the bountiful breakfast table, she could enjoy her traveling companion: the Noe Valley Voice.



S.F. Girls Chorus Weaves 'Patterns' By Castro Street Composer

By Jeff Kaliss

When your life is full of music, Noe Valley's a good place to be living it.

Among those singing the praises of the neighborhood are Noelle Peck-Daly, who has been rehearsing her part with the San Francisco Girls Chorus, and Jake Heggie, an up-and-coming composer of songs and operas. And the two have a connection.

Peck-Daly, who lives with her parents on Laidley Street, will perform with the Chorus at Davies Symphony Hall on May 24. The program will include the world premiere of *Patterns*, a piece composed by Heggie, who works and resides in a Victorian flat on Castro Street near 23rd.

"My windows are almost at street level, so I never feel far away from the real world," says Heggie. "I see people walking by, peering in the windows while I'm working at the piano. And there's a beautiful garden out back, where I can take escapes."

It's not that he really wants to escape his cornucopia of musical projects. But his schedule is demanding. It currently includes a performance by Chanticleer of a piece he wrote to a text by former Noe Valley resident Armistead Maupin; the release this fall of an album of Heggie songs sung by a variety of America's best classical vocalists; a recital of his material at New York's Lincoln Center a year from now; and an opera he just finished and is now orchestrating, based on *Dead Man Walking* and due to debut in the San Francisco Opera's 2000-2001 season.

Heggie is quick to name the "guardian angel" hovering over many of these endeavors: she's Frederica von Stade, a world-class mezzo-soprano now based in Alameda. Von Stade will sing on Heggie's album and will play the convict's mother in the opera, as well as perform with Chanticleer, at Lincoln Center, and in *Patterns* with the Girls Chorus this month at Davies. She also provided the Steinway piano now busy in Heggie's flat, an "extended loan" of an instrument formerly owned by her father.

Opera singer and composer met when Heggie was working a day (and evening) job a few years ago in the publicity department of the San Francisco Opera.

"I gave her some songs as an opening night gift, when she appeared there in *Dangerous Liaisons*," Heggie recalls. "Later we read through them, and she said, 'These are really good, Jake. Would you like to give a recital some time?'" She insisted that Heggie refer to her by her nickname, "Flicka," and the two have been friends and collaborators ever since.

"She's a great actress and a great singer, but there's also this wonderful empathy and warmth which comes over the footlights," enthuses Heggie. "She's a real genuine, honest person ... and there's a throb in her voice, it's a heartthrob."

The composer admits that some of these same qualities may be present in his own music. "It's tuneful, and I write honestly," he says. "It's a combination of accessible and recognizable tunes you can hold on to, with long, lyrical, arching lines, the kind of thing the voice does well."

When the Girls Chorus approached von Stade, she immediately suggested that Heggie be commissioned to create a piece for her and Chorissima, the Chorus' 41-voice concert and touring ensemble. Heggie selected "Patterns," a poem by turn-of-the-century American poet Amy Lowell, about a young woman forced to grow up quickly when her betrothed is killed in battle.



Noelle Peck-Daly (front row, left) will join the other members of Chorissima, and opera star Frederica von Stade, in premiering *Patterns* May 24. Photo by Kingmond Young

"You have this contrast of an inner voice, which is this young girl, and an external voice, which is a young woman who's suddenly become very mature," notes Heggie. "So it was just perfect for this combination between the girls' voices and Flicka's."

Noelle Peck-Daly, at age 15 a seven-year veteran of the Chorus and one of the singers in Chorissima, is herself a mezzo-soprano and looking forward to meeting von Stade, a longtime role model. Meanwhile, she has been studying "Patterns" in her own garden, and empathizing with the young subject of the poem.

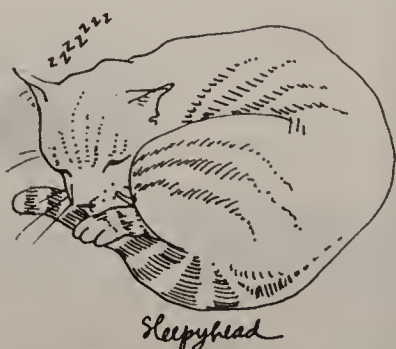
"She imagines herself running through her garden," Peck-Daly points out, "but all the while she's sitting very stiffly, confined in these stiff clothes...and suffocated by the social demands on her that restrict her behavior. So it deals with a lot of women's rights issues which we've all come in contact with."

The Girls Chorus, now in its 20th anniversary season, has helped hundreds of girls like Peck-Daly to overcome female stereotypes, including the assumption that girls can't perform modern works like Heggie's.

"*Patterns* is harder to learn, but it allows for more expression, because the emotions are more striking," says the young singer. "The style is like impressionistic painting, in a way: it's not so much the form that matters, but the emotions it brings out in the listener."

The May 24 concert will showcase other kinds of music too, Peck-Daly explains. "We're singing a Schubert piece where the chord progressions are all very traditional—it's what the ear expects—and we're singing some folk songs. Some of these are very simple, but they have to be because we're performing them with the Chorus School, the younger singers who aren't very experienced. It'll be a group of about 400 girls, and in that context it becomes very significant and comes to life." □

For the complete Davies program and more information about the Girls Chorus, including auditions, call 673-1511. For tickets, call City Box Office at 392-4400.



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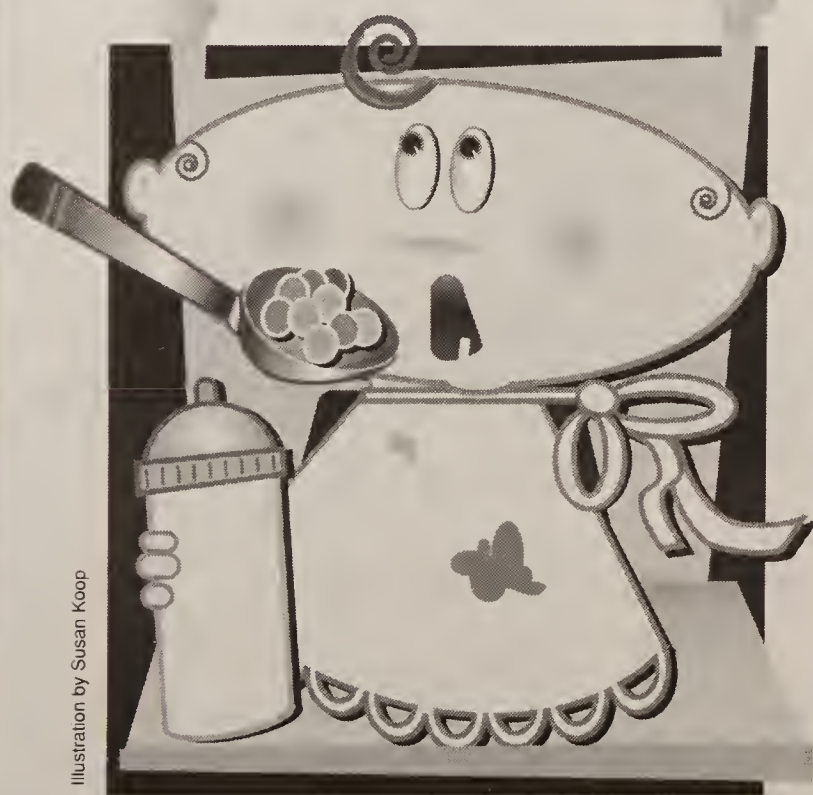


Illustration by Susan Koop

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Kids' Picks

Hey Kids, Let's Put on a Show!

By Dodie Hamblen

What's the hottest ticket in town? A theater arts program for kids — that's what. The Lively Arts Workshop is a summer camp that's made to order for aspiring young thespians — as well as for working parents.

Operating out of Rooftop Alternative School at 500 Corbett Ave. (near Clayton), Lively Arts offers visual and performing arts programs for children entering grades three through nine.

"This summer we are celebrating our 10th season," says director and program coordinator Elisa Ronstadt Elliott. A theater arts specialist at Rooftop for 15 years, Elliott has been with Lively Arts since the beginning. "There are a number of programs similar to ours, but we were here first," says Elliott. "One of the things that sets us apart is our ratio of seven or eight kids to one staff person."

Among her fellow directors are music director Dorothy Moskowitz Falarski and choreographer Pamela Wong.

The program, which accepts up to 50 students, attracts kids from public and independent schools all over the city. "But," says Elliott, who lives on 26th Street, "most of our students come from the 94114 and 94131 zip codes."

One is 10-year-old Sophie Curtis, who is making a return engagement this year. "I really think Lively Arts is a cool and fun program, and all kids should go," says



Lively Arts camp director Elisa Ronstadt Elliott puts Caroline Stone, 11, and Ryan Joe, 10, in their places to perform the "Legendary Musicians of Brementown."

Photo by Pamela Gerard

Sophie. "When summer is over, I am so sad that Lively Arts is over."

Sophie's mom, Martha Curtis, is also impressed with the program's quality: "The teachers — artists, songwriters, and musicians — are very professional and love to work with kids. They're warm and nurturing, and the art projects are very creative. One of Sophie's productions was Ukrainian folk tales, and they made really beautiful Ukrainian cloth dolls."

Continued on Next Page



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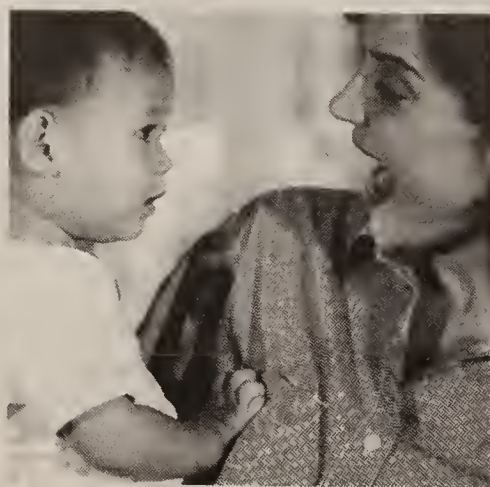
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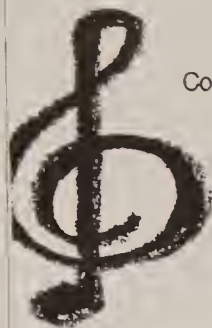
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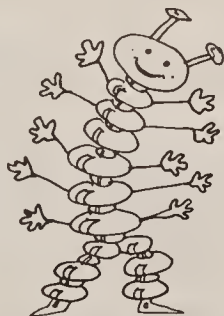
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Kids' Picks

A Summer Arts Camp for Kids

Continued from Previous Page

Elliott says that while the summer program involves lots of learning about the arts, the focus is on having fun. "We serve snacks and have recess and, yes, they can play basketball here, too. But we hope

that the campers come away realizing that we are all artists, that they can express themselves in spoken word, song, movement, and visual arts with some confidence, and that they should value their own and others' contributions to the group—but, above all, have fun."

For third- to sixth-graders, the curtain rises for three 2-week sessions on June 14. Kids may sign up for all three sessions or just one. The last session ends July 23.

The core program, called "Lively Arts," runs from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., and includes theater games, skits, music, art, dance, and rehearsals for a performance at the end of the two weeks. The cost for one session is \$210.

If kids want to stay all day, they can attend a "Quiet Arts" afternoon program from 1 to 3:30 p.m. Starting with tea and a story, this program is a mix of crafts, cooking, story projects, singing, and outdoor games. There's also an "Other Arts" program, dabbling in props and scenery, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m.

Moms and dads (and the public at large) are invited to the final show, which includes dramatizations of myths and legends, as well as material written by the students. This summer's performances—at noon on June 24, July 8, and July 22—will feature African folk tales and adaptations of "The Legendary Musicians of Brentown" and "The Frog Prince."

For older kids—those in the sixth to ninth grades—Lively Arts holds a week-long workshop from July 26 to 30, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. This session covers theater games, music, and improvisation, and costs \$135.

Elliott says many of the younger kids attend two Lively Arts sessions, and fees go down the more sessions you take (\$390 for two 2-week sessions; \$570 for three). Parents should add \$100 per session for the afternoon Quiet Arts program, and \$40 if their child takes the one-hour scenery class.

Scholarships are available, and the program is committed to diversity, Elliott says. This year the Lively Arts Workshop, a nonprofit organization, was proud to receive a community grant from the Noe Valley branch of the Bank of America.

Elliott points out that no prior performing experience is necessary. To sign up, give her a call at 641-4960. □

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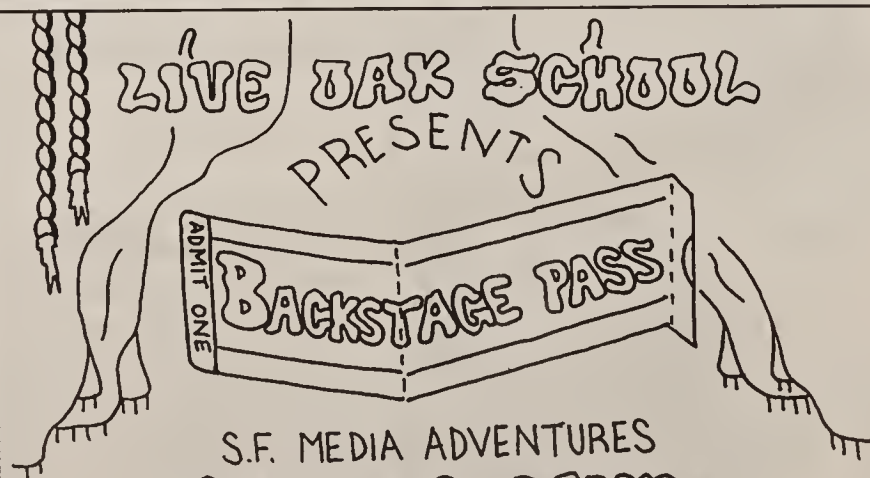


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Take Me Out to The Ball Game!

By Alison Pence

The weather's warm, the birds are singing, and the smell of newly mown grass fills the air. What time is it? It's time to play ball in Noe Valley!

The spring season of the San Francisco Youth Baseball League, which fields 180 teams for kids ages 5 to 14, is already loading the bases at two local parks. According to Peter Oquendo, who coordinates the program for the city's Recreation and Park Department, there will be plenty of opportunities for young sluggers to hit home runs.

Oquendo says 24 games have been scheduled through June for Upper Noe Recreation Center, and 21 for the diamond at Upper Douglass Park — and that's just the lineup for the 7 to 8 and 9 to 10 age groups.

"We have teeball for little kids, ages 5 to 6 and 7 to 8. That's where they hit a spongy ball off of a post, or tee. There is also a coach-pitched team of 7- to 8-year-olds called the Mustangs. The 9- to 10-year-olds move up to a standard baseball," Oquendo says.

He adds that all the teams are co-ed — boys and girls — and have a minimum of 15 players each.

Oquendo points out that these "learning leagues" teach kids the basic skills but put the emphasis on having fun. There are no playoffs or championships until the players reach the 11 to 12 (Bronco) and 13 to 14 (Pony) divisions.

PONY, or Protect Our Nation's Youth, is a nationwide league comparable to Little League. These kids pitch their own games and hold playoffs. San Francisco's Pony season ends in June with a championship game at Jackson Park.

Oquendo says he has about 360 coaches and assistant coaches, mainly teachers from local schools, dads, retirees, PALS, or Rec and Park staff. (PALS are members of the Police Athletic League, which, along with the San Francisco Fire Department, funds and supports the city ball clubs.) Everyone who works with the teams is fingerprinted.

If you would like to spend some time developing our next Joe DiMaggio, call Oquendo at 753-7029. "We are always looking for umpires for the 11- to 12-year-olds." A new summer season starts in June.

Meanwhile, neighborhood baseball lovers are crossing their split fingers that Noe Valley fields will stay in shape to play ball. (Dog walkers can help by keeping their pets on the leash and their plastic bags handy.)

The field at Upper Noe was closed off for reseeding and repair this winter, but March and April rains delayed the work. "I had three games canceled there last week. I had to scramble to find another field," says Oquendo.

Local schools also have been signing up to use our ball parks. Kids from St. Paul's, St. Philip's, and Buena Vista School often make road trips to Upper Noe Recreation Center. "We try to accommodate everyone," says Willie Dickens, the park director.

Dickens says there will be two girls' softball teams — 12 and under and 14 and under — at Upper Noe this summer, and perhaps a women's softball team. (Call 695-5011 to find out the score.)

In addition, Upper Noe will host the popular Twilight League, an adult men's softball league playing Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. "Twilight games have been played on this field for 30 years," notes Dickens.

Those interested can sign up at the Upper Noe clubhouse at Day and Sanchez. Teams will be formed in June.

Over at Upper Douglass Park (Douglass and 27th), Director Steve Bell will be coaching an 18-member "Pinto" team, for children under 8. He says half of the boys and girls are regulars in his after-school program at Douglass Playground.

Bell also will coach a Junior Giants team, for kids 10 and under. And Cheryl Woltjen, co-director at Douglass, will start a girls' 12-and-under softball practice group in May.

Actual play begins in July. If you'd like to go to bat for them, call Bell or Woltjen at the park at 695-5017.

Like Upper Noe, Douglass Park is available to other groups and teams. To reserve a playing field, call the Athletic Field Reservations line at 831-5510. A lighted baseball field costs \$35 for two hours. "We are more heavily used than ever before," says Bell. "I have put in a request for more help to maintain the field through the summer."

So make your plans early, stock up on Cracker Jacks, and go out and root, root, root for the home team. □

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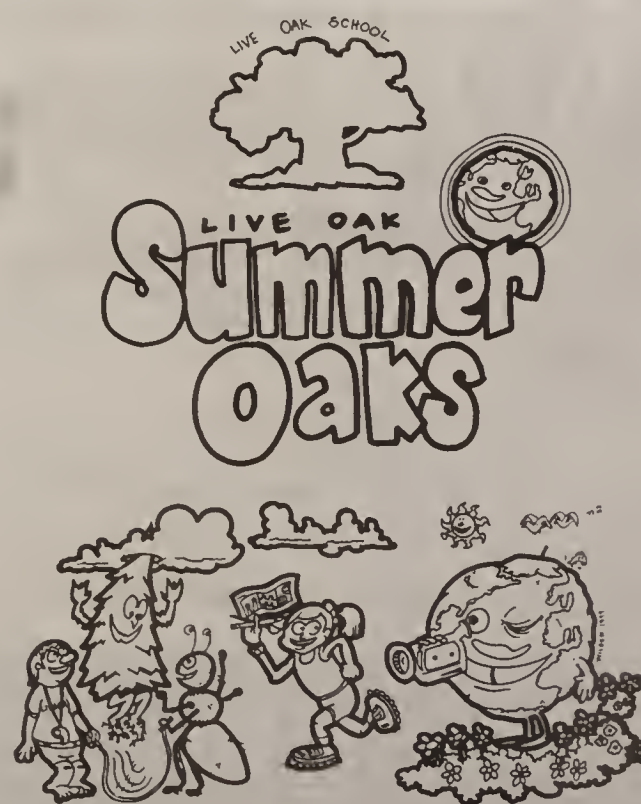
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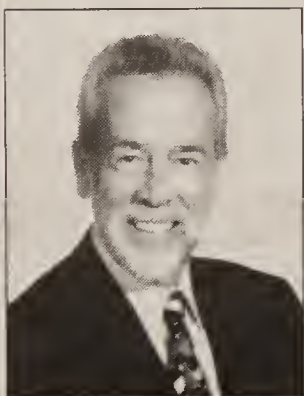
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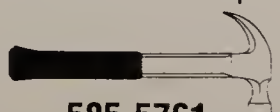
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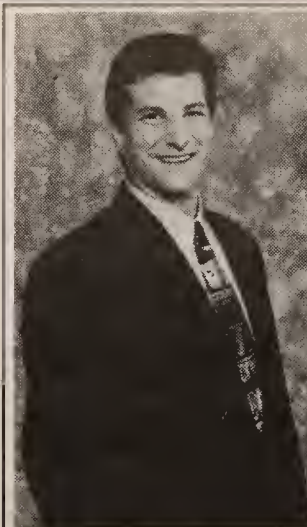
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FLORENCE'S FAMILY ALBUM

Illustrated Reminiscences
by Florence Holub

Spinning a Scandinavian Yarn

There were three responses to my December column in the *Voice*—the one which featured “A Weaver’s Prayer” by Swedish weaver Valborg Gravender.

The first was a phone call from my museum docent friend Jean Mooney (of last month’s column). Jean had an interesting story to share. About 40 years ago when she was teaching at the Bayshore City School in Visitacion Valley, she learned that the school’s weaving classes were to be discontinued and that a man with a sledgehammer had been hired to break up the looms and haul them away. Being an arts and crafts lover, Jean was horrified to think that these fine implements might be destroyed, so she sprang into action.

Conveniently, her nephew, Dan Murphy, was living in a Mill Valley cottage owned by Mrs. Gravender, who was known to all as “Mama” Gravender. With Dan’s encouragement, Jean phoned his famous landlady, who was then retired, and asked if she’d be interested in adopting the dozen wooden orphans. Mama assured Jean that she would be delighted to find them good homes. Jean then arranged to have her brother-in-law Bill (Dan’s father) haul the trailerful of looms to Mill Valley. Let’s hope some are still in use today.

A second note came from Charlotte Black, who was our Sanchez hilltop neighbor until last year. She wrote that she’d especially enjoyed the column mentioning Valborg Gravender because she had taken lessons years ago at her weaving school in North Beach.

A third correspondent, a weaving student in Bernal Heights, wrote that my article brought back fond memories of her own lessons under Mama Gravender, who seems to be recorded warmly and indelibly in the minds of all those whose paths she crossed. Regrettably, I did not have the opportunity to meet the lady, although I gradually became aware of her importance to the local artist colony.

In 1922, the year that Valborg Gravender came to San Francisco, I was 3 years old and living on a potato farm in Idaho. I later found out that Valborg was born in Gävle, Sweden, around the turn of the century (I’m not sure of her birth date, nor of her death). In her early career, she worked as a trained nurse.

She married a writer, Axel Gravender, who had previously traveled to the Bay Area on an assignment. Axel had been so taken with San Francisco that he convinced his bride to make the city their home.

Before sailing to the U.S., the couple pooled their resources—about \$2,000—and invested in Swedish artifacts. They packed up their treasures, intending to sell them if they were in need of cash. Once here, however, they both found work quickly and were able to keep the lovely things for their own pleasure.

Two years after they arrived, Valborg’s sister and her husband also moved to San Francisco. The sister immediately started a weaving school, but after only

a few months she and her husband decided to relocate to Cincinnati.

Valborg, like most Scandinavian women of the day, was a skilled weaver herself. So she gave up her nursing job to take over her sister’s school, with Axel’s help. Some of the students lived with the Gravenders as paying boarders during their training, and then there were always visiting guests from Sweden. Before long, the weaving school, called Sveagard House, became a magnet for artists and immigrants. It must have been a delightful place to learn the craft, as well as a bustling center for Nordic food and customs.

There were many evenings of dancing, Charlotte Black later told me. Her husband Bob, who had waited tables at Sveagard House, recalled doing spirited folk dances on the lower level.

Mama Gravender would greet the guests at the door dressed in native costume—a colorful, intricately woven skirt, a white linen blouse, and a handmade apron with long decorative ties ending in tassels. Upon her head sat a small hat, trimmed in lace.

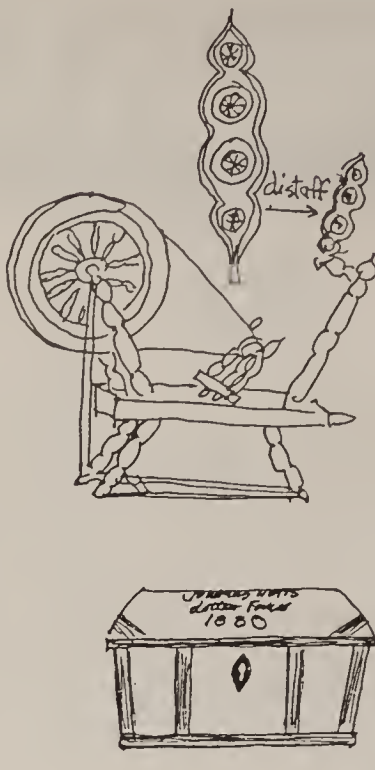
Costumes like this are still worn all over Scandinavia. Each has its own design and colors, identifying the wearer’s hometown. Vörå, the town where my father was born in Finland, has a similar costume for the ladies to wear on festive occasions. That is because Finland was part of the Swedish Kingdom for more than 400 years. Finland didn’t become an independent nation until 1917.

In 1971, my father and I went back to the Old Country to settle the family estate after his sister Maria’s death. At the same time, I went about acquiring a Vörå dress, like my Aunt Maria said I should have because of my family roots there. (My mother had died when I was a teenager.)

My aunt’s friend Linnea took me to a crafts center, where we talked with someone about weaving a Vörå dress for me to take home. However, when the day of my departure came, I left empty-handed.

The following year, my father and I returned to complete the estate. We were told that all of Maria’s possessions would be auctioned off and that we should remove those items we wished to keep. It turned out that the things we chose were mainly related to weaving:

- Maria’s spinning wheel (which now rests in Leo’s and my attic),
- an elaborately carved distaff to hold unspun fiber (now hanging on our wall),



In the early years of this century, young women in Sweden and Finland handwove their entire trousseau, which included a dress identifying their hometown. Illustrations by Florence Holub

- six beautiful beige-and-white brocaded tablecloths, and
- a handmade hope chest etched with the names of my father’s parents, who were married in 1880.

The chest, which now sits in our living room, was the kind that a young girl would fill with all the weavings she’d prepared for her future married life.

It is impossible for machine-age people like ourselves to appreciate the time and effort once devoted to the weaving of textiles! I received a glimpse when my aunt told how she and my father as children would chop the flax stalks and carry them home for the purpose of making linen. The stalks were slashed vertically, combed into strands, spun,

woven, beaten with a batlet, washed many times, and then hung out to dry. The lengths of linen would later be ironed on a wooden mangle.

My father vividly remembered one very cold day when he was sent out for firewood. As he passed a shed with the door ajar, he was startled to see a shadowy, silent figure hovering inside. He spoke to the woman, but got no reply, so he lunged at the apparition, grabbing at the folds of her dress. A terrifying sound resulted, like the rattling of dry bones. He stood paralyzed with fear until he realized that the ghostly lady was only pieces of linen that had frozen stiff while wet. What a relief!

My father also spoke of how hard a woman’s life was in those years. His mother was the first to rise to prepare breakfast. Then she joined the workers in the fields, sowing rye, barley, oats, and potatoes. She prepared dinner, and after everyone had gone to bed, she’d sit down to weave. The soothing sound of the loom lulled my father to sleep.

I would like to think that this part of my grandmother’s day was the greatest pleasure, creating a thing of beauty alone, with the shuttle flying across, between the warp threads, back and forth, back and forth, in rhythm with the beat of her heart.

On that second trip to Finland, just as we were about to depart, I suddenly remembered the Vörå dress, then with regret decided there was no time for a fitting. But Linnea spoke up, saying, “It is finished, you can pick it up now.” Which we did!

I’ve now cherished that dress for close to three decades. The red and green frock is so beautifully detailed I wear it proudly, but only on special occasions—such as the *Noe Valley Voice* staff parties! □

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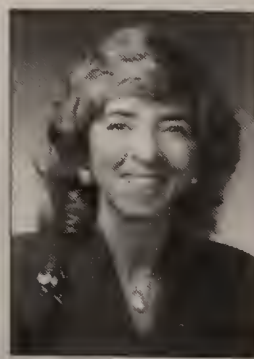
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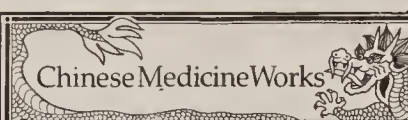
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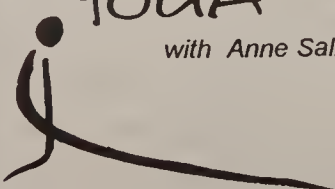
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Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100
Collingwood St., 7:30 p.m.

Diamond Heights Community Association

Contact: Robert Dockendorff, 826-3867
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 31529, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Thursday of month, 7:30 p.m. Call for location.

Dolores Heights Improvement Club

Contact: Amy Powell, 647-4228
Mailing Address: 3732 21st St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Bimonthly; membership meetings semi-annually. Call for details.

Duncan Newburg Association (DNA)

Contact: Evelyn Martin, 826-6734; Keith Eickman, 282-8988; Dennis Downing, 647-0937; or Deanna Mooney, 821-4045
Mailing Address: 560 Duncan St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Held periodically. Call for details.

East & West of Castro Street Improvement Club

Contact: Paul Kantus, 647-3753
Mailing Address: 492 Douglass St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: First Wednesday of month, Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7:30 p.m.

Eureka Valley Promotion Association

Contact: Lion Barnett, 255-3624
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 14137, San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Third Thursday (except July, August, and December), Eureka Valley Recreation Center, 100 Collingwood St., 7 p.m.

Fair Oaks Neighbors

Contact: Paul Nixon, 647-5183
Mailing Address: 163 Fair Oaks St., San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Call for details.

Fairmount Neighborhood Association

Contact: Susan Nutter, 285-8484
Mailing Address: 78 Harper St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Held periodically at Upper Noe Recreation Center, Day & Sanchez, 7 p.m.

Friends of Glen Canyon Park

Contact: Richard Craib, 648-0862
Mailing Address: 140 Turquoise Way, San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: Third Wednesday of the month, Glen Park Recreation Center, 7:30 p.m.

Friends of Noe Valley

Contact: Harry Stern, 821-1086, or Bill_Yenne@hotmail.com
Mailing Address: 327 Jersey St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: General meetings are held the second Thursday of the month in Feb., April, June, Aug., Oct., and Dec.
Noe Valley Library, 451 Jersey St., 7:45 p.m.

La Leche League of San Francisco

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Meetings: First Tuesday of month, Bernal Heights Library, Cortland & Moultrie, 10:15 a.m.

Liberty Hill Neighborhood Association

Contact: Julie Dilley, president, 647-7196, jdilley@earthlink.net; Joanna Sacks, vice president, 495-1470, joanna@softmed.com
Mailing Address: 3288 21st St., Box 44, San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Executive board meets first Tuesday of month; general meetings quarterly. Call for details.

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Voicemail: 675-0110; nichapin@aol.com.
Mailing Address: Noe Courts Coalition, P.O. Box 460520, San Francisco, CA 94146
Meetings: Irregular. Call for information.

Noe Valley Democratic Club

Contact: Dave Monks, 821-4087
Mailing Address: 1652 Dolores St. #6, San Francisco, CA 94110
Meetings: Second Wednesday of month, 7 p.m. Call for location.

Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association

Contact: Robert Roddick, 641-8692
Mailing Address: Robert T. Roddick, Noe Valley Law Offices, P.O. Box 460574, San Francisco, CA 94114-6003
Meetings: Last Wednesday of month, Bank of America, 24th & Castro, 9 a.m.

Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Improvement Association

Contact: Dorte Deubler, 824-4680
Mailing Address: 622 Douglass St., San Francisco, CA 94114
Meetings: Held periodically. Call for details.

Outer Noe Valley Merchants

Contact: Jim Appenrodt, 641-1500
Mailing Address: 294 29th St., San Francisco, CA 94131
Meetings: First Monday of month, St. Paul's Church cafeteria, 3 p.m.

Upper Noe Neighbors

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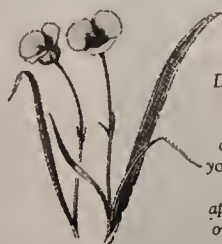
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MORE BOOKS to READ

Here's a selection of new books at the Noe Valley—Sally Brunn Library, provided by Head Librarian Roberta Greifer and Children's Librarian Carol Small. The library is located at 451 Jersey St. (near Castro Street). Besides books and periodicals, the branch offers CDs, Internet access, and past issues and an index to the *Noe Valley Voice*. Hours are Tuesdays, 10 to 9; Wednesdays, 1 to 9; Thursdays, 10 to 6; Fridays, 1 to 6; and Saturdays, noon to 6. To ask about the availability of a book or other materials, call 695-5095.

Adult Fiction

◆ *Elementals: Stories of Fire and Ice*, by A.S. Byatt, is the newest collection of short stories by the author of *Possession*.

◆ In *Gold*, a thriller by Brian Freemantle, a crashed Russian military plane is found to be mysteriously loaded with South African gold.

◆ In *Mistaken Identity* by Lisa Scottoline, "the female John Grisham," a criminal attorney defends a murderer claiming to be her identical twin.

Adult Nonfiction

◆ In *Another Country*, Mary Pipher, Ph.D., the author of *Reviving Ophelia*, tackles the transition to old age—for aging parents, as well as for their children.

◆ Both practical and spiritual, *The Courage to Be Rich*, by Suze Orman, describes how the average person can fulfill her financial potential, through acceptance, knowledge, and the courage to face the unknown.

◆ *The Cowboy Way: Seasons of a Montana Ranch*, by David McCumber, former editor at the *San Francisco Examiner*, is a colorful account of the 12 months he spent as a working cowboy.

◆ An exploration of bicultural conflict, *To See and See Again* by Tara Bahrapour describes her experience as the first in her Iranian-American family to return to Iran.

◆ *Woman: An Intimate Geography*, by Pulitzer Prize winner Natalie Angier, combines feminine insight with the biology, history, and literature of the female.

Annotations by Roberta Greifer

Films for Kids

◆ The library will show *films* for children 3 to 5 on Tuesday, May 18, at 10 and 11 a.m.

Preschool Story Time

◆ Parents and kids 3 to 5 are invited to the library's *preschool story time*, at 10 a.m. on Tuesdays May 4, 11, and 25.

Infant and Toddler Lapsit

◆ Children's Librarian Carol Small leads the finger play and lullabies at the Wednesday evening *lapsits*, May 5, 12, and 26. The music starts at 7 p.m.

Children's Fiction

◆ While it's raining outside, parents and son pass the time with an imaginative and loving game in *Pete's a Pizza* by William Steig. *Ages 3 to 5.*

◆ When a little girl is visited at home by a cute, active pig, one thing leads to another... and another... and another, in *If You Give a Pig a Pancake* by Laura Numeroff, illustrated by Felicia Bond. *Ages 3 to 5.*

◆ Joan Steiner must have spent countless hours finding and arranging all kinds of objects to create pictures; the result is a unique book, *Look-Alikes*. *Ages 3 and up.*

◆ A fish is separated from the rest of the school, then is reunited with the others, in *How Many Fish?*—an early reader written in rhyme by Caron Lee Cohen. *Ages 5 to 6.*

◆ A smart and resourceful 9-year-old, who helps her family in important ways, has problems learning to read until she gets the type of teaching she needs in *Just Juice* by Karen Hesse. *Ages 8 to 10.*

◆ Getting to know a variety of interesting people, including an African Pygmy who is on display, 12-year-old Harry has an unforgettable summer at the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, in *Song of the Molimo* by San Francisco author Jane Cutler. *Ages 9 and up.*

Children's Nonfiction

◆ In *Fire!* Joy Masoff provides information on the history, training, techniques, and feelings of firefighters. *Ages 6 to 10.*

◆ If you enjoy optical illusions, and especially if they are colorfully and creatively presented, spend some time with *Walter Wick's Optical Tricks*, illustrated with the author's photographs. *Ages 8 and up.*

Annotations by Carol Small

Children's Music Making

◆ On Wednesday, May 19, Becky Desroches leads a *music program* for kids 7 and up, featuring rhythm instruments, stories, and singing and dancing. It starts at 7 p.m.

For other library events, call 557-4400 or visit the San Francisco Public Library web site at <http://sfpl.lib.ca.us>.



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Be a Shanti Support Volunteer! Shanti volunteers are ordinary people doing extraordinary things! You can make a difference in the life of someone living with HIV disease or AIDS. For info, contact Maureen Smith at 674-4722 or msmith@shanti.org.

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Piano Lessons for Kids. Noe Valley-based musician with B.A. and M.M. in music and pedagogy accepting beginning students. 15 years' experience. Carla, (415) 648-3651.

Laughing Meditation. This fun workshop involves some Hatha Yoga poses, extended conscious laughter, followed by a silent meditation. Dress for Hatha Yoga, bring a towel, and expect to have a wonderful, fun time. Tuesday, May 11, 6 to 7:30 p.m., \$8. Integral Yoga Institute, 770 Dolores St. (415) 821-1117.

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Hot Flash! Midlife Women's Group in Noe Valley. Meet with women your age (40s to 60s). supporting each other through the struggles, challenges, and joys of midlife. We are trailblazers and elders in training, redefining what aging means to us. Arlene Dumas, LCSW. 641-4553.

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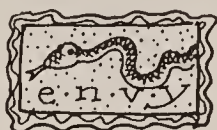
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Mama and Baby Sing-Along Classes. May 18 to June 8, 10 a.m., Tuesdays, \$35. "Rhythm Kids": May 18 to July 13 and May 21 to July 16, 10:40 a.m., Tuesdays or Fridays, \$75. Infant and Child CPR: May 22, 12:30 to 4:30 p.m., \$43. Natural Resources, 1307 Castro. (415) 550-2611.

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Even if the ad is a renewal from a prior issue, please send us the full text of your ad. Also note that phone numbers, including area code, count as one word.

10 for 10 Discount: The *Noe Valley Voice* publishes a news edition 10 months a year. (We're on vacation in January and August.) If you place the *same* class ad in 10 issues, you are entitled to a 10 percent discount. To figure your cost, deduct 10 percent from the total amount due for 10 issues.

The next *Noe Valley Voice* will be distributed on June 2. **The deadline for June 1999 Class Ads is May 15.**

Sorry, the *Voice* is unable to accept Class Ads by phone or e-mail at this time. But there's one consolation: The ads are displayed on our web site at no charge: www.noevalleyvoice.com.

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Words Wanted: The *Noe Valley Voice* welcomes submissions of poems, stories, and essays, particularly those with neighborhood themes. Payment upon publication. Send manuscript (typed, please), plus name, address, and phone, to the *Noe Valley Voice*, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114.

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For a Song. Kerry Parker, administrative director of the Noe Valley Ministry, has favored passersby with her fiddling on 24th Street, but she can also take a tuneful break from her work up on Sanchez Street. The lobby has great acoustics, too. Photo by Pamela Gerard

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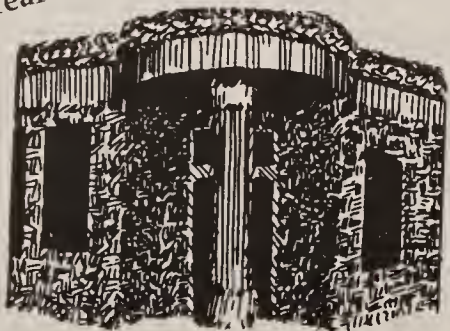
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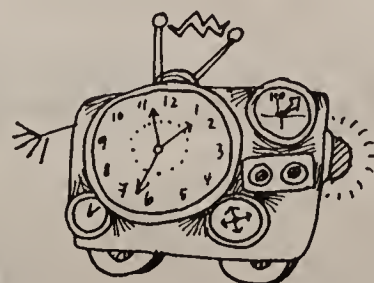
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and now for the RUMORS behind the news

Getting Involved in The Neighborhood

By Mazook

GOOD RELATIONS between James Lick middle schoolers and local shopkeepers are blossoming this spring as a result of initiatives begun earlier this year.

As you *Voice* regulars know, hostility between some merchants and the Lick students burst onto the front page of the paper last fall. What followed was a barrage of letters to the editor about friction between the two groups.

To defuse the situation, the Noe Valley Merchants and Professionals Association sent representatives to Lick in January. They met with the staff, students, and parents, "and talked about ways to communicate better and do more together," reports the school's family newsletter. "The meeting was a good beginning, and everyone agreed to observe more carefully what was going on between them."

School Principal Michael Eddings adds that "the students and merchants also said they'd try to trust and show more respect for one another."



This breathtaking scene of two scientists discussing the fate of salmon near the Sacramento River is among the 200 images Noe Valley photographer Robert Dawson includes in his new book *Farewell, Promised Land*. He'll show you more at a signing at Cover to Cover May 14.

Since then, the merchants have formed a Student Relations Committee chaired by Dennis Weaver, a Downtown Noe Valley lawyer. And the group has continued to meet monthly at the school.

One topic they've been discussing is the Student Mentor Program, created so that merchants and other outside adults could help the kids develop business and fundraising skills. The fundraising tips should come in handy, since Lick is trying to send about 60 students on educational field trips to Mexico and Egypt.

Dennis says that "seven or eight merchants have already linked up with individual students and they are working together now. This has been fantastic, and we hope to link up many more."

The Lick students are getting it together, too. About 30 seventh- and eighth-

graders left April 25 for an eight-day excursion to Mexico. Sixth-graders are planning a field trip to Egypt in early June.

To meld into the mentoring, call Dennis at 641-0700.

☎ ☎ ☎

NOE VALLEON Vanessa Watt, who lives (since '86) and works here (since '93) as a licensed marriage, family, and child counselor, is looking for families in Noe Valley willing to host high school students from foreign countries for either five- or ten-month stints.

Vanessa says she's taken on the project because of her love for children (she has two of her own) and her interest in widening her cultural experiences. She's doing it through a nonprofit organization called Face the World in San Rafael, and thinks

Noe Valley and foreign-exchange students make a perfect match. "I feel that our neighborhood will offer the friendly family atmosphere we want the students to experience," says Vanessa.

She adds that host families can be "childless couples, a couple with teens, or a couple with small children—even a single person." So, if you want to influence Noe Valley's foreign policy, give Vanessa a call at 821-7517.

Meanwhile, former *Voice* staffer Leslie Phillips, who now works for Senator Joe Lieberman in Washington, D.C., sends word that Noe Valleons can sign up to take in Kosovar refugees by calling 1-800-727-4420. Hurry, she says, because the line has been jammed lately.

If you can't get through, drop by and say hi to Mervyn Mark and his customers at What's for Dessert, who recently raised \$1,000 to be donated to Doctors Without Borders. These docs are heading for the Balkans, where their help will be needed for a long time to come. Maybe you can still add to Mervyn's kitty.

☎ ☎ ☎

UPDATING the Noe Valley Neighborhood Parks Improvement Association's efforts, leader Dorthie Deubler reports that the group, with help from Supervisor Mark Leno, has gotten assurances from Rec and Park chief Joel Robinson that Douglass Playground is on the top of the list to receive some new, donated play equipment. "Rec and Park is telling us this could happen as soon as the end of July. But I would be thrilled if it happened by the end of the summer," beams Dorthie.

Dorthie is proud that "we've raised over \$8,000 ourselves, put in new water fountains, and installed benches and new bulletin boards," with help from B.J. Droubi, Zephyr Real Estate, the Noe Courts Coali-

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RUMORS

Continued from Previous Page

tion, and the East & West of Castro Club. "But the actual play equipment has been around since the 1950s, and there's a lot of splintering wood. About 150 kids use that park every day, so we feel it's time for the city to upgrade the park itself, with playground equipment that is safe and ADA-accessible [approved under the Americans with Disabilities Act]."

She points out that Douglass doesn't have too far to go, since the playground already has a level entrance (at 26th Street), ramps to the clubhouse, and revamped bathrooms in place. Thus, the city could finish the job with just a little more investment.

Stay tuned for further updates.

☎ ☎ ☎

UPPER NOE NEIGHBORS had more than 50 people show up at their April 22 meeting at the Upper Noe Rec Center. Smiling UNN prez Vicki Rosen says, "We had fun, and a lot of old-time residents showed up!"

One topic that came up during the evening was the dogs vs. kids debate at Upper Noe park. A "subcommittee on park priorities and peaceful co-existence" was formed, with the resolve to accomplish what its name suggests.

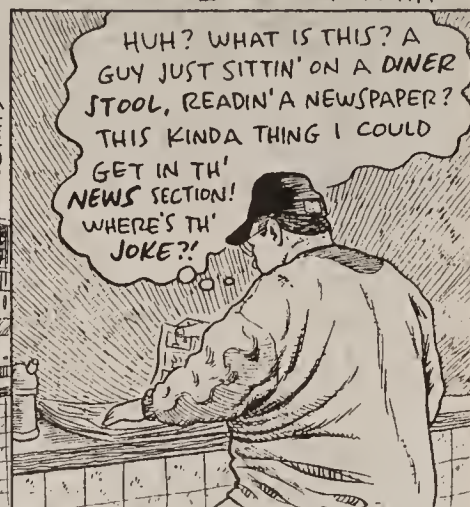
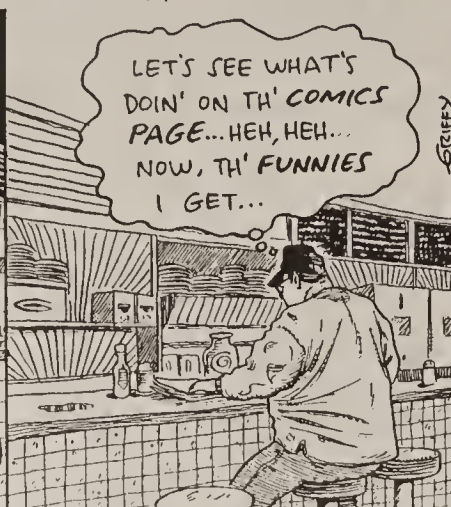
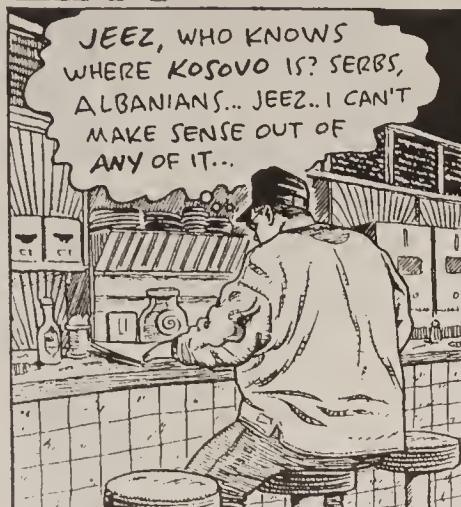
Other big news in Upper Noe Valley is that Star Bakery is set to reopen by the end of May. Hooray! Rumors were circulating that the bakery, which had been a neighborhood fixture since 1899, would go poof and turn into another restaurant.

Noe Valley native Charles Walter is returning to Star, where he was head baker in 1979 and 1980. "The bakery will be a

ZIPPER

"THE BALKANIZATION OF BREAKFAST"

Bill Griffith



neighborhood treat... something lost and found again." Charles says confidently.

The interior might be remodeled and the name changed, to distinguish it from the previous Star Bakery (which its last owner, Laura Catapano, closed and then "moved" to Van Ness a year ago), but the old Star Bakery traditions will remain, like inside table seating and that famous Irish soda bread. (For St. Paddy's Day, Charles baked up several hundred loaves for Drewes Market across the street. The bread flew out the doors when word of its availability spread.)

The coffee brand has yet to be determined. I vote for the only coffee roaster that has yet to appear in Noe Valley: Caffè Trieste. (I still have to commute to North Beach for my favorite blend.)

☎ ☎ ☎

SHORT SHRIFTS: The 24th Street shop 21st Century Video is setting up a home delivery service, so you can phone in your movie orders, to coincide with your pizza delivery. Ah, life in Noe Valley... Misha's Antiques has closed, and Misha reportedly has opened a shop on Post Street near Union Square... The old Cov-

er to Cover storefront on 24th near Sanchez has had its windows covered for weeks, with remodeling going on inside. Rumor has it that the shop will be filled with home furnishings and artifacts from Indonesia, where the new owner has reportedly been buying his stock and trade.

Changes are on tap for Rabat clothing. Owner Patty Woody tells me that after 20 years in the small shop at the corner of Noe and 24th, Rabat will expand into the space formerly occupied by Yankee Clipper, the last in a series of travel agencies that have done business next door. By the way, Patty originally opened Rabat in 1973 down 24th Street, where Isa's hair salon is now.

Tuggey's Hardware (which has been at the same location in Downtown Noe Valley since 1898!) is bemoaning the loss of store clerk Ron Peetz, who, after 20 years on the job, recently took a leave of absence to have hip surgery. Tuggey's owner Denny Giovannoli says he's looking for a retired hardware store employee or other handyperson to help out in the store on a regular basis. Any takers?

☎ ☎ ☎

COVER TO COVER BOOKS, which is ensconced in its new location at 3812 24th St., will host at least two book parties for Noe Valley authors this month.

The first will celebrate the release of *Mother's Nature: Timeless Wisdom for the Journey into Motherhood*, a "guidebook and inspirational companion" co-authored by Noe Valley resident Andrea Alban Gosline and illustrator Lisa Burnett Bossi. The party starts at 7 p.m. on Sat-

urday, May 8, and both Andrea and Lisa will be there to do readings from the book.

Mother's Nature features more than 270 reflections on motherhood — from Princess Grace, Thich Nhat Hanh, Ursula LeGuin, Carl Jung, Maya Angelou, Mother Teresa, and the Dalai Lama, among others. "I got the inspiration for creating the book while I was pregnant with my daughter," says Andrea, who wrote some of the affirmations herself. Sounds like the ideal Mother's Day gift.

Appearing at Cover to Cover on May 14, also at 7 p.m., will be Noe Valley photographer Robert Dawson. He'll be signing copies of his latest work, *Farewell, Promised Land: Waking from the California Dream* (co-authored by Gray Brechin). The book examines the history of and alternatives to the destruction of California's environment, and contains 200 Dawson photographs. A selection of these photos are also on display at the Oakland Museum. The exhibit, titled "Awakening from the California Dream: An Environmental History," runs through Sept. 12.

Robert Dawson teaches photography at both Stanford and San Jose State. He lived in Noe Valley from 1982 to 1988, then moved to the Excelsior District. ("That was a mistake," laughs wife Ellen.) They moved back here in 1996.

Let's all go down to Cover to Cover and welcome him back.

☎ ☎ ☎

THAT'S ALL, YOU ALL. Have a great May and an eventful Mother's Day (or noneventful, if you prefer). Ciao for now.

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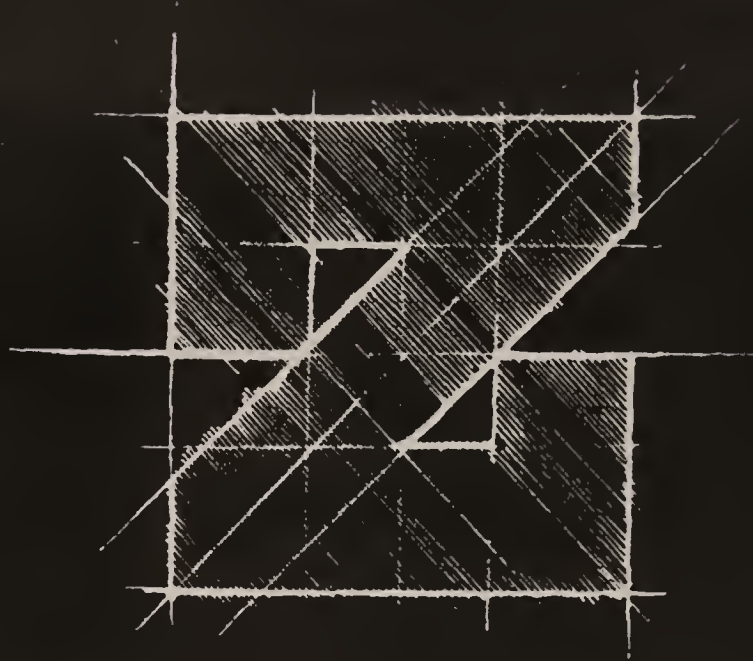
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Harvey Milk and Me

BY BRENDA MCMANUS

It's a chilly wet night and I'm sitting by the fire, cozy and warm, thinking about my lovely new grandson.

The phone rings, and it's my son calling from work.

"Hi Mom, I'm working late. Do you want to go see the opera tonight? It's *Harvey Milk*. I have a ticket, but I can't make it."

My silence is loud.

"Do you want to sell the ticket?" he continues. "It's a hundred dollars, and you can keep the money."

Oh boy, that would pay for my photographs of Ireland, or my writing class in December, or a week's groceries, although it seems food prices have doubled in the past couple of months. But I don't want to go out in the cold, and I'd never get a hundred for it anyway. I'm embarrassed to even have a ticket at that price to sell. What with people hungry and homeless and dying of AIDS...

"Mom, are you there?"

"Okay," I say grumpily, "I'll take it. Thanks."

I drag my arthritic feet together, struggle into my raincoat, and call for the dog. Bo-Bo is huge, black, and woolly, a cross between a bear and a Wookiee. A Bouvier de Flandres, he's actually just a French sheep dog with a fancy name, who likes to herd everyone in the house, including the cat, L.B., who plaintively puts up with him.

It's been raining for days now and he hates getting wet, so I have to leash him up and drag him outside for a pee. He's such a wimp. He tried to pee in the cat box, but he got it all over himself and went around emanating cat pee for a day till I could give him a bath. He's also taken to jumping up on the dining room table and trying to see through the window whenever he's left

alone. Of course, he knocks everything off in the process, but it's a miracle how he gets up there in the first place.

I grab my purse and hustle him into the Taurus, where he plops down in the back on the old towel I

keep there for him so he won't totally destroy the seat.

I get down to Van Ness and I'm looking for the Opera House and I can't find the damn thing. On my second drive around the block, I see that it's being retrofitted for earthquake damage and is now disguised as a construction site. Since there's no one around anyway, I put two and two together and come up with the brilliant deduction that the performance must be elsewhere.

I pull up to a streetlight, snatch a look at the ticket, and catch the words "Orpheum Theatre." Oh God, where's the Orpheum? Market and something, I remember. It's starting to rain again.

Pulling around to McAllister Street, I park in a no-parking zone and jump out looking for someone to get directions from. Stumbling up the curb and around a concrete pole, I catch sight of a slender black woman crossing the street. We speak simultaneously: "Can you tell me where the Orpheum is?" "Will you give me and my baby a ride to the battered women's shelter?"

Oh, Lord, I'm stopped short. This is not what I'm here for, is it?

"My husband gets out of jail tomorrow," she says, "and I gotta get me and my baby out of here. He beat me up before, and he'll do it again. The shelter I'm in is full for tomorrow, and I have to get to another one." She gestures nervously, eyes wide and frightened. Her shoulders are drawn together as if to protect her heart.

"Where's your baby?" I say, knowing that she can hear the hesitation in my voice.

"Back at the shelter with a friend."

"And where's the shelter you're going to?"

"San Mateo," she says, taking from her jacket a torn piece of paper, on which is scribbled an address. I see writing, but the words don't register in my brain.

"The cab fare is twenty-one dollars, and I don't have it," she says. Her voice has a desperate tone to it.

"Where's San Mateo?" I ask.

"Down near San Jose," says she.

Damn, I don't want to drive to San-bloody-Mateo. I decide that if I can sell the ticket, I'll give her the money.

"Do you want to come to the Orpheum with me to sell this ticket? Will you show me where it is? I'll give you the money for a cab," I tell her.

*Stumbling up to the curb
and around a concrete pole,*

*I catch sight of a
slender black woman
crossing the street.*

We speak simultaneously:

*"Can you tell me where
the Orpheum is?"*

*"Will you give me and my
baby a ride to the battered
women's shelter?"*

"Sure," she says, then balks as I open the passenger-side door of my car. "You wanna get in first?" she asks, looking at the black shaggy bear in the back seat. "He's big. Will he bite me?"

Good point, I think. Bo-Bo has been known to scare the hell out of the mailman. I get in the car and she climbs in the front seat.

"Okay, first light turn right, then left," she guides me. We park in another no-parking zone, jump out, lock the doors, and hurry across to the Orpheum.

"What's your name?" I ask.

"DeeDee," she says, "what's yours? Wait — watch out for that car!" she yells as she grabs my arm, pulling me back from oncoming traffic.

"Bren," I reply. "Thanks!"

In front of the Orpheum I wave my ticket in the air. "Great seat!" I shout. No one is buying. There are two others selling, and last-minute patrons are hurrying in. I pace up and down, scanning the streets for potential buyers. DeeDee squeezes her arms to her body in distress. She walks away to the cement barrier and looks back, anguish on her face.

The gray-haired, gray-suited, distinguished-looking doorman announces, "Curtain going up, no one seated after the performance starts."

A slim woman with glasses and dark blond hair walks up and looks at me. "How much for your ticket?"

"It's worth a hundred," I say, "but I'll take fifty. Great seat."

She hesitates, then says, "I think I can give you forty." I grimace. "At least I think I've got forty," she says.

Doubtfully, I look around. There's no one else buying.

She starts counting her money. "Gee, well... I guess I've got thirty-seven."

Casting a quick look at DeeDee, I decide, "Okay, it's yours." "Wow, thanks."

I count the money into DeeDee's hand. "Bless you," she says. We hug and I say, "Be safe." I walk back to the car and the dog, and when I look around, DeeDee is gone.

The new library is brightly lit. On my left in a storefront window I catch a glimpse of a man's face behind the glass. He is handsome and brown, but the look on his face is sad.

I cross over Market Street, get stuck on Howard, realize I have to go down a couple more blocks, and finally head up toward Mission, Cesar Chavez, and home. Thoughts and feelings rush through me. Why didn't I take her to the shelter, take her home with me, ask if she was hungry, give her more money, give her my phone number?

Tears roll down my cheeks as I remember absent fathers and hurt children, remember being so desperate I felt crazy. I drive up to the house on the hill thinking about the inequities of life. There but for the grace of God, yeah, yeah, yeah. Walk in another's footsteps. Right!

When I awoke the next morning, I had dreamed of helping a friend compose a Buddhist chant. It's a privilege to be able to give, anything.

Bernal Heights resident Brenda McManus, who's originally from northern England, credits a writing workshop with Adair Lara as encouraging her creative writing. Last year she wrote and performed with a senior performance group in Marin County. She also is a photographer, singer, and a "Celt at heart." She deems her work with Hospice of Petaluma one of the great experiences of her life.

WRITERS

The Noe Valley Voice invites you to submit fiction, literary nonfiction, or poetry for possible publication on the Last Page. Please mail your manuscript, which should be typed, double-spaced, and no more than 1,500 words, to the Noe Valley Voice, 1021 Sanchez St., San Francisco, CA 94114. Don't forget to send a phone number. We look forward to hearing from you.



Every Day Is Mother's Day for Jane Loeser, especially since baby Sam (shown here at 3½ months) joined big brother Jonathan, 7, and sister Aidan, 8. If you have a new addition, let the Voice know at 821-3324. Photo by Pamela Gerard, assisted by Sophie Nunberg, 9, who shook the rattle!